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ABB breaks ground for world's most advanced robotics factory in Shanghai

Factory of the future strengthens ABB's leading position in China, the world's largest robotics market

ABB has begun construction of its new 67,000-m^2 robotics manufacturing and research facility in Kangqiao, near Shanghai. Expected to open in 2021, it will be the most advanced, automated and flexible factory in the robotics industry worldwide, utilizing the latest manufacturing processes – a cutting-edge center where robots make robots.

The facility will also host a world-class research and development center, which will accelerate innovations in robotics and artificial intelligence (AI). The center will serve as an open innovation hub where ABB closely collaborates with its customers to co-develop automation solutions tailored to individual needs.

ABB's robotics solutions serve a diverse customer base in Asia, supporting automotive manufacturers, particularly in e-mobility, as well as manufacturers in the electronics, food and beverage, pharmaceuticals, logistics automation and general industries, amongst many others. ABB predicts that global robot sales will grow from $80bn today to $130bn in 2025. China is the world's largest robotics market; one of three robots sold globally in 2017 went to China.

"Since the project announcement last October, we have been provided with tremendous support from the local government," said Peter Voser, Chairman and CEO of ABB. "It has been listed among the Top 10 projects of the 'Manufacturing in Shanghai' initiative in 2019, a great honor for ABB. The establishment of the new factory is another milestone in ABB's development in China and will further strengthen our leadership in the world's largest robotics market."

"As the market leader in industrial robotics in China, we are proud to support the Chinese industry in strengthening its manufacturing sector," said Sami Atiya, President of ABB's Robotics and Discrete Automation business.

Production in the highly automated facility will be based on cells of automation, with robots moving from station to station, enabling greater customization and more flexibility than in traditional, linear production systems.

The factory will be a complete digital manufacturing ecosystem, employing a 'digital twin' that will give everyone from managers and engineers to operators and maintenance teams data insights and machine learning capabilities to improve performance and maximize productivity. ABB will use a machine learning-based system to inspect robots as they are being assembled, to ensure the highest quality standards.