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## **HKUST WINS GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR COOPERATIVE RESEARCH CENTERS**

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology has received funding totaling HK\$12.25 million from the Research Grants Council (RGC) to support the establishment of four university/industry cooperative research centers. These centers, each of which has a 25% supplementary funding commitment from industry, will help Hong Kong advance towards its goal of being a knowledge-based, technology-oriented modern society.

The Advanced Cement-Based Building Products Cooperative Research Center, led by Dr Zongjin Li, assistant professor at the Civil Engineering Department, received HK\$3.25 million. Studies to be conducted at the Center will include the optimization of two novel construction composites and the development of innovative concrete (cement-based) products. One goal of these studies is to offer viable solutions for reducing the use of tropical hardwoods for interior finishing in construction.

The Automation Technology Cooperative Research Center will combine the vast technical expertise of the University with the unique product-development experience of the industry in developing automation technologies for electronics manufacturing. The Center, headed by Dr Zexiang Li, associate professor of the Electrical and Electronic Engineering Department, received HK\$3 million.

The ATM/IP Telephony Solution Cooperative Research Center, which received HK\$3 million, will focus on the needs of the future communications network infrastructure. With industry participation, the Center will conduct advanced research and prototyping for the support of voice/telephone communications over the asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) and the Internet Protocol (IP). The Center is managed jointly by Professor Xiren Cao from the Electrical and Electronic Engineering Department and Dr Bo Li from the Computer Science Department.

The Cooperative Research Center for MPEG-4 Based Information Technology also received HK\$3 million. It aims at developing a full-scale MPEG-4 standard-compliant infrastructure for fundamental research and the prototyping of multimedia applications. The Center will also develop software tools to implement various MPEG-4 features on PCs and workstations. This Center is managed jointly by Dr Ishfaq Ahmad from the Computer Science Department and Professor Ming Lei Liou from the Electrical and Electronic Engineering Department.

"These cooperative research centers require research excellence, local relevance and partnership with industry," says Professor Tony Eastham, associate vice-president for research and development at HKUST. "Our success shows that our research does offer substantial benefits to the social and economic development of Hong Kong."

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