IBC Paper 01/2026

International Business Committee

Enhancing Connectivity and Mobility Within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the latest developments in the work of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government in enhancing connectivity and mobility within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area), focusing on measures to strengthen trade and investment flows and facilitate the "northbound" travel for non-Chinese Hong Kong residents within the Greater Bay Area.

Overview on the Development of the Greater Bay Area

2. The development of the Greater Bay Area is a key national strategy personally devised, personally planned and personally driven by President Xi Jinping. It serves as a vital pillar in promoting regional integration and high-quality development of the country. Consolidating and enhancing the role of the Greater Bay Area as an engine for high-quality development is also one of the strategic directions to enhance regional economic layout and foster co-ordinated regional development, as set out in the National 15th Five-Year Plan.

3. The HKSAR Government attaches great importance to promoting the development of the Greater Bay Area. Shortly upon the establishment of the current-term Government, the Steering Group on Integration into National Development (Steering Group) was promptly set up. Chaired by the Chief Executive himself with three Secretaries of Departments as deputies, the Steering Group takes forward and steers from the top level on the various work on Hong Kong's integration into the overall national development and dovetailing with key national strategies such as the development of the Greater Bay Area.

4. With the strong support of the Central Authorities,

Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao have been working collaboratively. Policy measures to foster connectivity within the Greater Bay Area have been introduced one after another. The ensuing paragraphs set out the latest developments in respective policy portfolios and the work of the HKSAR Government in enhancing connectivity and mobility within the Greater Bay Area.

Strengthening Trade and Investment Flows

The Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA)

5. The HKSAR Government strives to assist Hong Kong's enterprises in entering the Mainland market through CEPA, seeking more room for development for the trade on the Mainland and, at the same time, strengthening the economic and trade relations between the two places and fostering trade and investment facilitation. Since the signing of CEPA in 2003, the Mainland and Hong Kong have continuously enriched and updated the contents of CEPA, furthering the opening up of the Mainland market to Hong Kong businesses.

6. Under the CEPA Agreement on Trade in Services (the Services Agreement), enterprises and individuals meeting the criteria of Hong Kong Service Suppliers can enjoy preferential access in most services sectors in the Mainland market. To further liberalise and facilitate trade in services, the two sides signed another amendment agreement (the Amendment Agreement II) on 9 October 2024 to enhance the Services Agreement, which has been implemented since 1 March 2025. The Amendment Agreement II introduces additional liberalisation measures in a number of services sectors where Hong Kong enjoys competitive advantages. Most of the liberalisation measures apply to the whole Mainland, while some are for pilot implementation in the nine municipalities in the Greater Bay Area, thereby making it easier for Hong Kong professionals and service suppliers to set up enterprises and develop businesses on the Mainland. These pilot measures further enhance the level of liberalisation of trade in services between the Greater Bay Area and Hong Kong. This not only satisfies the keen demand for Hong Kong's professional services arising from the development of the Greater Bay Area, but also facilitates Hong Kong service providers to grasp the enormous opportunities in the Greater Bay Area services

market, enabling Hong Kong to integrate into and serve the overall national development more actively.

7. Under the CEPA Agreement on Trade in Goods, all products made in Hong Kong and meeting the CEPA rules of origin (ROOs) can enjoy the preference of zero tariff upon importation into the Mainland. By end-May 2026, the cumulative tariff savings for goods cleared with the Mainland Customs under this arrangement amounted to more than RMB 10.8 billion.

8. CEPA is nationality-neutral and does not impose restriction on the source of investments in order to become eligible for the CEPA benefits. Investors from outside Hong Kong are welcome to leverage the preferential treatment offered by CEPA. On trade in services, service providers from outside Hong Kong are welcome to establish their businesses in Hong Kong, or join force with Hong Kong enterprises, to make use of CEPA opportunities. As for trade in goods, investors from outside Hong Kong can set up manufacturing operations in Hong Kong or partner with Hong Kong manufacturers to produce goods meeting CEPA ROOs to enjoy the preference of zero tariff for importation into the Mainland. CEPA brings new business opportunities not only to the Mainland and Hong Kong, but also to foreign companies.

Greater Bay Area Standards (GBA Standards)

9. To grasp the development opportunities brought about by the Greater Bay Area, the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao develop GBA Standards of various products and services for relevant trades to adopt on a voluntary basis, with a view to improving product and service quality, promoting the interconnectivity and integrated development of the three places, as well as deepening Hong Kong's economic and trade exchanges and co-operation with the Mainland and Macao. As of end-May 2026, a total of 270 GBA Standards have been developed and promulgated, covering various fields, including food quality and safety, Cantonese cuisine, prepared dishes, transportation, mechanical and electrical products, as well as medical care, nursing care, education, e-sports and "Environmental, Social and Governance", etc. GBA Standards can help the trade improve product and service quality, and better meet the Mainland's standards and market demand, thereby facilitating the promotion of their products and services in the Greater Bay Area. The governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong

and Macao will further promote the development of GBA Standards in accordance with the established mechanism.

Single E-Lock Scheme (SELS)

10. To facilitate the flow of goods between Hong Kong and the Mainland (including different municipalities in the Greater Bay Area), the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) and the Mainland Customs have jointly implemented the SELS, which makes use of electronic lock and satellite-based tracking system to ensure that goods are not interfered during transportation, thereby reducing the need for duplicate inspections on the same shipment by both customs authorities. Currently, the SELS covers 100 clearance points including 71 in Guangdong Province (among which 63 are within the Greater Bay Area), four in Hunan Province, seven in Fujian Province, one in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, four in Macao and 13 in Hong Kong, providing the trade with over 1 000 routes for conveying transhipment cargo across the boundaries. C&ED and the Mainland Customs will continue to collaborate in taking forward initiatives to enhance efficiency in customs clearance.

Assisting Mainland Enterprises in Going Global via Hong Kong

11. To better support Mainland enterprises to go global, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) established the cross-bureau, cross-departmental Task Force on Supporting Mainland Enterprises in Going Global (GoGlobal Task Force) in October 2025. It serves as a one-stop platform to attract Mainland enterprises, including those from Greater Bay Area, to expand businesses to overseas markets through Hong Kong. The GoGlobal Task Force is proactively taking forward various tasks as follows –

(a) The GoGlobal Task Force proactively attracts key Mainland enterprises to set up businesses in Hong Kong, assisting them in progressively developing various corporate functions and business operations that satisfy overseas market standards [1], thereby preparing them for going global;

(b) As one of the GoGlobal Task Force members, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) launched the

[1] For example, Mainland enterprises may establish in Hong Kong regional headquarters and corporate treasury centres to fulfil requirements on corporate structures, cross-boundary capital, industry certifications, compliance, etc.

cross-sectoral professional services platform GoGlobal Connect (the Platform) in April 2026, bringing together eight groups of Hong Kong professional service providers [2] to precisely match the services needs of Mainland enterprises seeking to go global and provide them with professional and customised consultation services;

(c) The GoGlobal Task Force has organised over 10 promotional events in Hong Kong and Mainland, including a large-scale seminar officiated by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development in Guangzhou in April 2026. To enhance online publicity, a dedicated GoGlobal Task Force website (www.goglobal.gov.hk) was launched in March 2026, providing practical information and connecting to the HKTDC's Platform;

(d) The GoGlobal Task Force also organises outbound missions led by government officials to enable Mainland enterprises to visit overseas markets to better understand the local market environment. For instance, the Chief Executive led a high-level business delegation (including around 30 Mainland enterprises representatives) to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in early June 2026; and

(e) CEDB and the Ministry of Commerce signed a memorandum of understanding in February 2026, seeking to strengthen co-operation and exchange in the provision of comprehensive overseas services and enhance the capacity of supporting Mainland enterprises to go global. For collaboration at provincial level, CEDB, the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau and HKTDC joined an alliance on GoGlobal professional services led by the Guangdong Provincial Government in March 2026, thereby stepping up regional co-operation.

12. Going forward, the HKSAR Government will strive to develop "go global" services into a new growth area for Hong Kong's economy, while fostering the robust development of professional and commercial services in Hong Kong.

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[2] The eight groups of Hong Kong professional service providers include financial services; legal services; accounting, tax and business advisory services; design, marketing and brand management services; logistics and transportation services; telecommunications and information and communications technology services; infrastructure and real estate related services; and testing and certification services.

HKTDC's Measures to Support Enterprises to Tap Into the Greater Bay Area Market

13. The HKSAR Government has been actively assisting Hong Kong enterprises in tapping into the Mainland domestic market through HKTDC, with a view to seizing the enormous business opportunities on the Mainland. Among others, HKTDC launched the "GoGBA one-stop platform" (the GoGBA Platform) in June-2021 to assist Hong Kong enterprises in building network and promoting business opportunities in the Greater Bay Area, and to provide them with the latest policy updates and economic and trade information about the Greater Bay Area market.

14. The GoGBA Platform's GoGBA mobile app, website and e-newsletter provide business policy and practical information online about the Greater Bay Area as well as diversified cross-boundary business travel tools. In addition, HKTDC also provides comprehensive physical services through the "HKTDC GBA Centres" established in Shenzhen and Guangzhou and a network of 11 "GoGBA Business Support Centres" jointly set up with partner organisations covering all nine Mainland cities in the Greater Bay Area and Macao. HKTDC will also continue to enhance the services of the GoGBA Platform, including organising Greater Bay Area missions and inviting experts to provide Hong Kong enterprises with in-depth analyses on and practical guidance in doing business in the Greater Bay Area.

15. HKTDC also organises various themed and industry-specific business missions across Greater Bay Area and other Mainland cities to support Hong Kong enterprises grow in the Mainland domestic sales market. Apart from the above, in 2026-27, HKTDC will embark on business missions to popular Greater Bay Area cities and launch a new series of expatriates consultation activities to help foreign-invested enterprises in Hong Kong (including members of foreign chambers of commerce) deepen understanding of the local business environment and the latest technological developments, supporting them in exploring the growth opportunities in the Greater Bay Area.

Attracting Overseas Enterprises to Explore the Greater Bay Area Market

16. The HKSAR Government attaches great importance to promoting the latest developments and immense opportunities of the Greater Bay Area to the international community. Invest Hong

Kong (InvestHK), as the investment promotion agency of the HKSAR Government, is committed to proactively showcasing the vast potential and integrated advantages of the Greater Bay Area, with a view to attracting overseas enterprises to explore this dynamic market.

17. To synergise efforts in this regard, InvestHK maintains close collaboration with the Mainland counterparts through the established Pan-Greater Bay Area Inward Investment Liaison Group (Liaison Group). This tripartite mechanism brings together the Governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao to conduct joint overseas promotions, presenting the Greater Bay Area as an integrated and world-class business destination. For example, the Liaison Group organised its annual flagship conference in Hungary and Egypt in 2025, building on earlier successful events in key European markets such as Germany and France.

18. In addition to the Liaison Group, InvestHK also works closely with the Investment Promotion Bureau of Shenzhen Municipality on targeted overseas promotion, with focus on highlighting the complementary advantages and business opportunities of Hong Kong and Shenzhen, and attracting overseas enterprises to establish their presence in this dynamic core region of the Greater Bay Area. Over the past few years, numerous overseas investment promotion activities have been successfully co-organised, including seminars and roundtables in Sydney, New York, Brussels, Italy and Canada, etc.

Facilitating the "Northbound" Travel for Non-Chinese Hong Kong Residents

19. The HKSAR Government is committed to enhancing the clearance convenience and efficiency for non-Chinese Hong Kong residents travelling to and from the Mainland, with a view to attracting more overseas companies to establish or expand their businesses in Hong Kong and facilitating foreigners working in these companies to travel to the Mainland for business purposes.

<u>"Northbound" Multiple-entry Visa</u>

20. Starting from October 2023, non-Chinese Hong Kong residents (including non-permanent residents) could make

applications in Hong Kong for "multiple-entry" visas to the Mainland. The validity period of the visas has been further extended to a maximum of five years since October 2024. Foreign staff of Hong Kong-registered companies awaiting submission of documents are provided with priority arrangement. This facilitation measure enables foreigners who come to Hong Kong for employment or starting businesses to enjoy convenience when they travel to and from the Mainland on multiple occasions, thereby promoting business exchanges. As at the end of May 2026, about 49 200 applications for "multiple-entry" visas were approved, and around 4 700 foreign staff of Hong Kong-registered companies enjoyed the priority arrangement.

Mainland Travel Permits for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (Non-Chinese Citizens)

21. In order to further facilitate non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents to travel to the Mainland, starting from July 2024, the Mainland authorities have begun issuing Mainland Travel Permits for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (Non-Chinese Citizens) (Card-type Document). Non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents holding the card would be able to enjoy self-service clearance at control points of the Mainland, significantly enhancing clearance efficiency. The Card-type Document is valid for five years, during which card holders can travel to the Mainland multiple times with a stay not exceeding 90 days for each visit.

22. The issuance of Card-type Documents to non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents not only facilitates their access to the Mainland for business, travelling and visiting relatives, but also gives them a stronger sense of identity and national cohesion as residents of Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area. According to the information provided by the Exit and Entry Administration of the People's Republic of China (EEA), there were a total of about 143 000 applications as at the end of May 2026, for which the EEA had issued about 102 000 Card-type Documents.

23. The HKSAR Government will continue to maintain close liaison with relevant Mainland authorities to strive for more policy innovation and breakthrough on the "northbound" travel for non-Chinese Hong Kong residents. We will also step-up publicity on the facilitation measures through various bureaux/departments, as well as mass media and social media, with a view to further

deepening the interconnected flow of talents in the Greater Bay Area.

Looking Forward

24. The HKSAR Government will continue to maintain close liaison with relevant Central Ministries and Commissions, the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Macao Special Administrative Region Government to leverage the complementary strengths of the Greater Bay Area. We will work together with Guangdong and Macao to develop the Greater Bay Area into a strategic fulcrum of the country's new development pattern, a demonstration zone of high-quality development, and a pioneer of Chinese modernisation.

25. The HKSAR Government will also actively align with the major development directions set out in the National 15th Five-Year Plan and the development of relevant platforms, continue to deepen the alignment of rules and mechanisms amongst the cities of the Greater Bay Area, and facilitate the convenient cross-boundary flow of innovation elements, so as to better integrate into and serve the overall national development. We will also seek more policy breakthroughs that benefit Hong Kong and its people and foster the integrated development of the Greater Bay Area.

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
Security Bureau
June 2026