

CLC LECTURE

Enterprise-Led, Government-Supported, Market-Driven Collaboration Model: Sino-Singapore Guangzhou knowledge City

26 February 2018



From the Suzhou Industrial Park in the 1990s, to the Eco-City establishment in the 2000s, Singapore's collaboration with the Chinese in Suzhou and Tianjin has shed much light on the evolving needs of China over the years. Looking ahead, China's market, which comprises maturing industrial developments and a strong economy, is looking to upgrade to knowledge-based and higher value-added industries. As part of the publication launch, Ms Nina Yang, CEO of Sustainable Urban Development of Ascendas-Singbridge Group will share interesting experiences from these projects as well as its associated challenges. A panel consisting of experts from both private and public sectors will also discuss the lessons learnt for future collaborations and what we can look forward to in the near future.

Lecture Segment

Shi Hui
00:00:12

Good afternoon, I'm Shi Hui, from the Centre for Liveable Cities [CLC], and I will be your emcee for today's lecture.

Today, CLC will be launching our latest Urban Systems Studies, Sino-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City: A New Paradigm In Collaboration. We are honoured to have with us today [our] guest-of-honour, Mr Wong Kan Seng, Chairman of Ascendas-Singbridge Group to launch our Urban Systems Studies.

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First, we have speaker and panellist, Ms Nina Yang, CEO of Sustainable Urban Development of the Ascendas-Singbridge Group. Ms Yang has over 25 years of urban planning and building design experience. She's currently in charge of the urbanisation platform within Ascendas-Singbridge Group and oversees large-scale urban developments in partnership with the local government.

We are also pleased to have with us panellist, Mr Ng Kok Siong, Chief Executive Officer, Sino-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City [SSGKC], Ascendas-Singbridge Group. Mr Ng heads the joint venture company, serving as the master developer for the Guangzhou Knowledge City [GKC] project. With over 20 years of experience in real estate, he has been involved in the investment, development, asset management, mall management and consultancy for over 30 projects in the Asia-Pacific region.

From the International Enterprise [IE] Singapore, we have invited Ms April Oh, Regional Director of South China. Ms Oh has promoted internationalisation of Singapore-based companies in southern and central China, including Hong Kong and Macau.

We are also delighted to have with us two representatives from the industry: Dr Victor Li [Lietao] and Mr Michael Leong, as panellists. Dr Victor Li is the Founder and CEO of Lion TCR Pte Ltd. He has over 24 years of biopharmaceutical experience. He played an important role in numerous key functions of biological product development—from pre-clinical research, clinical trials, down to marketing strategy and financing. Lastly, we also have Mr Michael Leong, as a panellist. He is the CEO of SESTO Robotics Pte Ltd, a subsidiary of HOPE Technik, specialising in the field of autonomous technology. Mr Leong's experience with robotics technology, coupled with his in-depth knowledge of the industry, has led him to be appointed as the Chairman of Spring Singapore's Technical Committee for automation and robotics.

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The format for today's lecture will start off with a sharing by Ms Nina Yang, followed by a panel discussion, moderated by Dr Limin Hee, Director of Research, CLC, before a question and answer session with the audience.

To start off, I would like to invite Ms Nina Yang to share with us on GKC's development since its inception, and what's charting its future growth. Ms Yang, please.

[Applause]

Ms Nina Yang

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I think it is always a very unique opportunity to be involved as a master developer for a project of such scale and complexity. And it's really my pleasure today to be able to share with you our experience in developing such a[n] urbanisation platform in a Tier One gateway city in China.

So, I would like to first start by showing you a video of the Sino-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City—I'm not sure whether all of you have been there, but at least I can bring the city to you.

[Video plays in Mandarin 00:04:01 to 00:09:33]

I just want to start by saying the notion of master development—I think it's something that is quite...much talked about now in our Kallang Riverside district, in the Jurong Lake district, also more recently in the Punggol Digital district. But elsewhere, outside, overseas, this notion of master development is quite common. I think governments overseas are constantly under the pressure to develop new urban centres because they have to keep pace with the urbanisation demand for...population demand for urbanisation. So, government[s] with limited resources often have to look towards the private sector for what we can deliver: the speed, the capacity and the capability.

So, for venturing outside Singapore, master development is often a business model we adopt. So, within Ascendas-Singbridge, I have the

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fortune to be in charge of our investment portfolio in master development. Some of the projects are showcased here—we are also a minority investor in Tianjin Eco City [TEC].

Guangzhou Knowledge City's Development

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Back to Guangzhou Knowledge City, I think like many other master developments, the development of Guangzhou Knowledge City: I would summarise it as broadly going through three stages of growth: **Stage one is what I call setting the base. Stage two, is about building the industry ecosystem. And the third stage of growth is about developing the community.**

The first stage often starts with structuring the deal [and] structuring the implementation agreement together with our partner which is often the local government. Then, this is followed by land resettlement, land pooling, master planning and infrastructure implementation. And of course, there will also be [the] setting up of the JV [joint venture] company that will drive the development.

Well, I'm simplifying and glossing over the issues which you can all read about in the book, but what I want to say...is that this is the phase or the stage which is after the initial hypes. This is actually the most barren stage of the development. Because it's...it's also most challenging for aligning the interests of the stakeholders. Why? Because everything that we invest in, you know, in money, time, effort, what happened to them? They are all sunk underground. It will take a long time for anything to rise above the ground. So, this is always the stage that is...needs a lot of alignment between the private sector and the government.

So, when we first mooted the idea of the book with CLC, we are...GKC [was] almost I would say tail-end of the stage one. We have completed 90% of the infrastructure, the utility, the parks, the lakes, the green corridors. They're all completed. We have...also about to start development for some of the land parcel. So, you will see in the book

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that most of the book document[s] our experience in the stage one of the development, of the growth stage.

So, for today's sharing, I will actually talk more about our stage two, which is building the industry ecosystem. And this is the stage that is the acid test of the tenacity of the investor. While the premise of GKC was to showcase the economic transformation of Guangdong, to start something as a showcase of the economic transformation of the Guangdong province. So, for China, it is long past the phase of [the] industrialisation era of the Suzhou Industrial Park, where it is about cheap land and cheap labour.

Here, we are in a stage where we're talking about a[n] upgrade of the economic structure. And it's even a challenge for the local government. So, for us as a private sector, I think the challenge is higher. And we often have to do not just investment promotion, and mind you, the investment promotion[s] are to companies which are already...have "set up shop" in China already, you know. It is already...China is already so developed, and in fact, most of the big companies are Chinese local companies.

So, in terms of building the economy, you need...building the ecosystem, you actually have to market to local companies. And it is also about building talent pipeline with the local government. It is also about policy review, policy breakthrough, and things like physical and digital connectivity with the rest of the world.

So, in practice—of course being the ideal world—things don't happen the way we want [them to], and sometimes some of these basic things, including even the trunk infrastructure and the connectivity, cannot follow pace, according to the pace that we envisage. So, it's often a[n] uphill task, trying to get companies to want to relocate to GKC.

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So however, I think we persisted and today we are actually in a much better situation. As of last year, the Guangzhou transit line was already opened. The main transit line is open. Of course, we joked and said that this is the tourist line because you basically travel north-south within the Guangzhou Knowledge City. But however, the two other lines, the lines 21 and the line 14, that will connect the Guangzhou Knowledge City to downtown Guangzhou will open this year.

And at the same time, the government has also announced a new line – a new high-speed line – that will connect GKC to the Baiyun airport as well as a second airport to the east. And there will also be a Sui-Guan-Shen Cheng Ji Gui Dao [穗莞深城际轨道 literally translated as Guangzhou-Dongguan-Shenzhen Intercity Railway] Intercity Express. This will also connect GKC to Shenzhen. So, what it means is that for any residents or businessmen located in GKC, you are actually very close to the two major economic centres of Guangdong province. So, connectivity for a knowledge-based economy is very, very key.

GKC's Discernible Industry Ecosystems

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And in the meantime, for the local government, as far as the government is concerned, in any development of an urban centre, they only look at two key success factor. Number one, GDP [gross domestic product] growth; number two, employment creation. And for the nine years that Ascendas-Singbridge has been the Singapore consortium or the promoter for the GKC project, we have also—together with our JV company on ground, started to build three ecosystems—three discernible industry ecosystem[s]. And we can't do this alone. I think we have a lot of collaborators from Singapore. Many of you are here in this auditorium. Collaborators like IE Singapore or Enterprise Singapore, NTU [Nanyang Technological], IPOS (Intellectual Property Office of Singapore) and many companies here who are brave enough to take the plunge or the leap to GKC. And so, now we actually have three sort[s] of quite discernible industry system[s]. Let me start by talking about the first one.

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The first one is healthcare and biomedical. Here in GKC, I'm very happy to announce that by next year, we would have a thousand beds of [sic within a] hospital cluster opening in GKC. This cluster is made up of a government hospital, which is the Sun Yat Sen University Cancer Centre Hospital, and two private hospitals—Guangzhou Medical Centre and the Royal Medical Centre. Within this cluster, we will also have two proton treatment centres, that offer the most advanced form of oncology treatment. The Sun Yat Sen Hospital is [also] a very renowned top-tier government hospital, [with] excellent clinical trial and research capabilities. And this cluster is almost akin to our Novena Medical Hub, with Tan Tock Seng [Hospital] as the queen bee.

So, the Sun Yat Seng Hospital as [sic being] the queen bee is quite apparent, as it has been able to attract companies—companies like our Lion TCR. Lion TCR is a clinical stage biotechnology company, which is commercialising a self-therapy treatment that is licensed from our very own A*STAR [Agency for Science, Technology and Research] in Singapore. So, we are also able to attract other companies like GE [General Electric], that is going to set up a life science park, and also local players like Bai Ji Shen Zhou [百济神州 BeiGene], that will also have their own production facilities. So, this makes up the first cluster.

[The] second cluster that we have is innovation and advanced manufacturing. Here, [at] Ascendas-Singbridge, we invest in our own business park. Within this business park, we will have...we have, actually, different kinds of business spaces: from multi-tenanted to build-to-suit to construct-for-sales facilities. And as a cradle for innovation, we also work with universities. And here we have the fortune to work with NTU. With NTU, we're setting up a joint research institute, together with the South China University of Technology. And this SSIJRI, Sino-Singapore International Joint Research Institute, benefits from a 250 million RMB [renminbi] research fund—Chinese research fund, and it works on a two-plus-one...two-plus-x model, where projects put forth could be a collaboration between the two universities—or it could be with a third

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university. We now have 23 projects in the institute, focusing on six areas, so this is really becoming the queen bee for the innovation cluster.

And of course, another landmark project is the collaboration with IE Singapore, wherein we are able to bring together a cluster of Singapore home-grown automation manufacturing automation companies, to form the Singapore Manufacturing Innovation Centre [SMIC]. [I] think this is the first of its kind platform where we bring Singapore companies to work together with the Chinese enterprises on innovation solutions in a few areas: electronics, precision engineering, pharmaceutical, advance packaging, and also energy management. And I think some of you who remember that during the Singapore Budget, Minister Heng Swee Keat mentioned and profiled this project, which is how we're helping companies to find partnership overseas.

Later on, among the panellists, we will have Mr Michael Leong, who is [from] one of the companies within the SMIC, SESTO Robotics. Another company, K1, has also managed to find a strategic partner in China; they found a partner called Tao Tao Ju [陶陶居], which is a chain of restaurants, and together the two companies are going to look at environmentally friendly mobile washing technology in all Tao Tao Ju's restaurants. So, we have about six companies—very soon will be seven companies, who are signed on, onto this SMIC.

So going forward, we'll have more companies. We have already signed on UCOMMUNE, which is the China answer to WeWork. We are also going to sign on Digital China, that will also create an innovation platform. So, this cluster will be very vibrant from now on.

Then the last cluster is the intellectual property rights protection and services. I think in a place like GKC, in a knowledge economy, I cannot overemphasise the importance of protection and commercialisation of intellectual property rights. So, this is also the reason behind the China

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State Council approval for GKC as the one and only pilot zone for reforms in intellectual property rights protection and commercialisation. And the two countries, the government, the two countries, the intellectual property office[s] have come together, together with Guangdong province and signed on to make this a success—this pilot a success. This was inked in 2017 during the JCBC, the Joint Council Bilateral Cooperation meeting that is co-chaired by our DPM [Deputy Prime Minister] Teo Chee Hean and his counterpart, Zhang Gaoli. And this will be the pilot zone for protection.

And some of you may want to know that Guangdong province has continuously, for eight years, been number one in terms of this invention patent. And also, in terms of patent cooperation treaty, Guangzhou is also number one in China—or Guangdong province is number one in China, accounting for about 57% of the whole country's applications. So, we are going to have this patent examination centre from SIPO [State Intellectual Property Office] [of China], located here. We'll have 1,500 patent examiners, processing 200,000 patents a year. So, when China does things, everything is huge scale.

And from Singapore, IPOS, we also opened IPOS' first overseas representative office in GKC. So, I think people always talk about "You know, are you sure [about having a] knowledge city in China?" You'll want to know that China is progressing. I think they're doing a lot of work in terms of IP protection and IP commercialisation, and GKC is the place to be in.

The GKC Experience

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So, I think...I'm coming to my last two slides. I think in terms of the urban development, I just want to say that it was a huge experience for us because like I said, when you try to do investment promotion, you try to build the ecosystem, sometimes the other factors are not in place. So, as the master developer, I think we learnt that lesson...it's a very

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valuable lesson for us, and we also learn[t] that we often have to start looking at having catalytic developments, even before the place is ready. And so in the nine years that we were in the Singapore consortium for GKC, we have now finally able to see some light in terms of the industry that we are building within GKC. And we have also strung these key representations of these industries [together] in[to] what we call a 'smart loop'. This is a smart loop in our start up area—it is a four kilometre loop where you will see these key elements of the three industries. It is also where we will see the work, live and play elements that are characteristic of GKC.

We also carefully injected some Singapore element[s] in[to] this loop. So, we will have neighbour centres in this loop, we will also have the ABC [Active, Beautiful, Clean] Waters feature—better known as Sponge City in China—in this loop; and we will also have international schools in collaboration with a top institution from Singapore.

So, the idea of GKC was first conceived as a satellite township away from Guangzhou downtown. It is to be an integrated work, live, play urban development that is attractive to knowledge industries and knowledge workers. So, in the land use in GKC, about one-third...okay, equal proportion is devoted to residential, to industry—as in work places—and to public amenities. On top of that, we also kept a lot of land for things like world-class infrastructure and abundant greeneries and open space. For instance, in our start-up area, out of the 6.27 square kilometres, only 2.27 is for development.

So, going forward, we will focus a lot on the development of the public realm, of developing a discernible city image for GKC, along with the communal activities that we will curate and the programmes that we will do. So, I would like to end by saying that as we move into the third phase of growth for GKC, we're very excited to build a Sino-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City that is smart, learning, environmentally green, socially sustainable, and very important, economically viable.

Thank you. (Applause)

Panel and Q&A Segment

Dr Limin Hee

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We're very fortunate to have with us today a panel of very experienced practitioners as well as industry leaders from the private sector to share their experience on the Sino-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City. Now, Nina has just shared with us the context behind the planning and development of the city and its forward-looking plan, which adopts an enterprise-led, government-supported and market-driven collaboration model.

Kok Siong, could you provide us some insights about your involvement in the development project as the CEO of the joint venture company? And how GKC company work together with the local government to carry out the project? Kok Siong.

Mr Ng Kok Siong

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I was part of the initial team, who set up the GKC office—I think many of my colleagues are still here. I think it comprises of a group of very capable professionals from, at that time, PUB [Public Utilities Board], EDB [Economic Development Board], URA [Urban Redevelopment Authority], you know, our Chief Engineer from PUB, Moh [Wung Hee], was here [as well] to set up the yi lu shan shui [一路山水 a scenic road]. More importantly, I think it was also guided by two very experienced chairmen. The first was Mr Lim Chee Onn, who has [been] involved in the Suzhou and Tianjin project as well, and of course, subsequently Mr Wong Kan Seng, who has vast experience in the Sino-Singapore relationship.

The Role of GKC

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The role of GKC, correct, I think as Nina has pointed out, actually we focus on four key areas. The mission for GKC as set up in the master agreement is to create, or to develop, a vibrant city, with conducive

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conditions or environment to attract talent[ed], skilled manpower, and also knowledge-based industries. So, it goes **beyond** physical development. In other words, the industrial development, the strategic collaboration, is also very much [a part] of it. And so, as you can see, we do not do just physical development; we do not do only infrastructure provisions, for instance the roads, the waters; we [were] also involved very heavily in the industrial development and strategic collaboration. I think just now you have seen the IP hub that we have set up together with the Guangzhou government—or the Guangdong government actually. And also, [you should have seen] the Joint Research Institute, which happened to be witnessed...when we did the signing, it was witnessed by President Xi Jinping and PM [Prime Minister] Lee. So, it was a very high profile project.

So, this background [is] just to show that actually it's not just a team or a person alone. When I step[ped] in as CEO of GKC Co., actually many things had been done by our pioneer team and by many professional, even the BCA [Building and Construction Authority], IDA [Infocomm Development Authority]... was also involved very heavily in the earlier setup of GKC. So, I would say, it's actually a very good effort.

Working with the Chinese Government

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Now, in dealing with the Chinese government, I think to answer your second question, what does it take? I think a lot of patience and perseverance are [sic is] required. Why did I say that? I think in the seven years I've been there, we have three Guangzhou party sec and five local district party sec. So, you just imagine, every party sec will want to have their say, even in the planning process. I still remember there was this party sec called Wan Qingliang [万庆良]. Now, he came to GKC Co., GKC; and he was so excited. Straight away he issued an instruction. “Wo yao zao da lu, zhong da shu, wa da hu.” [“我要造大路，种大树，挖大湖。”] “I want to build big road; I want to plant big tree; I want to dig a big lake.” It was a nine square kilometre lake that they wanted to create.

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Obviously, Ascendas-Singbridge we opposed very strongly. Alright. Luckily, I think someone up there is [sic was] looking after us. He was actually arrested soon after for corruption. So, we need not carry out the plan. (Some laughter in audience). So what I am trying to say here is that actually for this type of Tier One project, you need to have perseverance and patience in carry[ing] out the vision and the objective that you set up—unlike many other short-term commercial project[s]. I was from the real estate fund before and our model was very simple. We went in, we execute it; one-and-a-half years later, we exit. High IRR [internal rate of return], you know. The return was fantastic. But for a Tier One project like this, you got to make it...you got to patiently mould it and create it according to your plan and your vision, and while of course making it commercially viable.

Dr Limin Hee
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Maybe Nina, that might be a good segue for you to **tell us more about the challenges encountered by Ascendas-Singbridge taking on the role of the master developer in Guangzhou Knowledge City?**

Ms Nina Yang
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Basically, the biggest challenge is, I think, as we've alerted [sic alluded] to, both of us, it's about stakeholder management. I think you have a private sector and you have a public sector. I think the government will only want to look at GDP growth. It will only want to look at how many companies you're bringing in and how many jobs you create. I think for us, the private sector, in the end, we'll only look at financial viability.

And for a project like that, being a very long gestation, I think we have to structure many things in the deal. I think it was a very complex structuring process for us to be able to structure in elements in there that can satisfy the private sector['s] need for financial viability, while at the same time be able to address [the] government's expectation to have jobs, to have a new urban centre, [and] to have [a] beautiful city being created.

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So, I think we learned a lot through the process, and I think of course, as Kok Siong was saying, patience is a virtue. I think I've learned to be a lot more patient after the project. Yeah, I think principally it is about how

to align two entities that's coming from very opposing ends. So, we always talk about public-private partnership, I think it is, to me, it's the very sexy idea, but actually that partnership has a lot of things that fundamentally is quite opposing in terms of objective.

Dr Limin Hee
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We have already heard that government agencies have played supporting roles to Singaporean developers venturing abroad in such major projects. Now, April, could you share first what kind of support is provided by IE Singapore to Singapore-based companies who are interested in investing and establishing operations in SSGKC, and other parts of China?

Ms April Oh
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Well, I've been based in Guangzhou for four-and-a-half years now, so I think I've been very fortunate to be involved in the development process of the GKC and being able to witness the entire infrastructure growth over the four-and-a-half years. So, I'm happy to be here today under the invitation of CLC and ASB [Ascendas-SingBridge], of course, to share about our government role in assisting this project in Guangzhou.

GKC: Enterprise-led, Government-supported

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So, firstly GKC is what we term [an] enterprise-led, but government-supported project. So, we actually place very strong emphasis in terms of government advocacy to support this project. In particular, we set up the Singapore-Guangdong Collaboration Council [SGCC], shortly after the project was established. So, the SGCC in short is a G-to-G [government-to-government] platform on the provincial level. We set this up with the support of the Guangdong government and of course, from Singapore[s] side, the minister, which at this point in time, is helmed by Minister Ong Ye Kung, to support the GKC project. So, really, GKC is what we term the zhong zhong zhi zhong xiang mu [重中之重项目] meaning an important project even amongst other important projects] under the SGCC, which is the most important project supported under SGCC. And it demonstrates Singapore's relevance and

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our continuous participation in Guangdong's economic transformation wave, especially in the area of software collaboration.

So, many will recall that when we first started talking about the project in 2008, the then party secretary of Guangdong, Wang Yang [汪洋], he was very much, you know, he very much wanted to work with Singapore in terms of software transfer, and at that point I think he was particularly interested in social management part of...Singapore's social management, to bring some of our skills and our expertise into Guangdong.

So, if you fast forward to 2017, I think Guangdong is now in the stage of economic transformation, looking at innovation driven growth. So, they talk about chuang xin qu dong fa zhan [创新驱动发展 literally translated as innovation-driven development], and we feel that Singapore continue[s] to participate in this area, especially in technology, innovation and entrepreneurship through the GKC project.

So, [an] example of course, as mentioned by Nina earlier, will be the launch of the Singapore Joint Research Institute, which is a joint effort by NTU and the South China University of Technology, as well as our Singapore Manufacturing Innovation Centre during the SGCC last year.

So, I think we've seen good progress and Singapore continues to stay relevant through working with GKC towards Guangdong's economic transformation.

Local Presence within GKC

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So, the next area I want to share about is some of the initiative[s] we've been working together with GKC to create platforms that will benefit more Singapore companies, more Singapore-based companies, especially the SMEs [small and medium enterprises]. We launched the Singapore Centre in 2015. I see many of my colleagues and counterparts

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here who have assisted in this launch then. The centre really functions as a platform to assist in our Singapore companies' market entry to South China. So, together we work on providing a service menu, with all the basic but necessary assistance to help our companies enter China through the GKC.

I think to date, we have about 30 registered entities—Singapore entities, Singapore companies and SME—within GKC, and I think more than half have [a] physical presence at Ascendas One Hub itself. So, I really see this as a win-win for everyone. So, for our Singapore SMEs, they have the benefit of working with ASB, who acts as the big boy in the market, to bring them and handhold them through the entire process of market setup and market entry to South China. And then, of course, Ascendas-Singbridge then...the industrial park then gets more tenants from the participation of our Singapore companies. And we're happy to inject more Singapore DNA [deoxyribonucleic acid] through this project into GKC.

So, that's one. And the China Ready Programme is really a manpower development programme that was launched by IE Singapore. The objective is to help our Singapore companies, especially the SMEs, to get their key executive ready for the China market. So, during the programme, the participant will spend some time in Singapore and some time in China, to learn the basics of doing business in China. So, they really go through the process and learn issues relating to HR [human resource] policy, taxation in China, economic trends, consumer behaviour—which are the basics of doing business in China.

So, I think we are very pleased to work with ASB to launch the pilot of this run for China Ready last year in 2017. I think we've received pretty good feedback from the companies through the first run. And maybe wo zai zhe li da ge guang gao [我在这里打个广告 I would just advertise something here]...(laughs), we are also doing the second run later part of this year in May. I think I have colleagues around here who can answer

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to your queries if you have anything...or if you're interested in this programme, we can have a chat later.

IP Hub: A State-Level IP Reform Zone

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So, the third part is on the IP Hub which I think Nina also touched on just now. So, the current state of play is such that GKC has been designated as the state-level IP reform zone. So, this means that GKC enjoys certain policy and incentives that is not available anywhere else in China. IE Singapore is working with IPOS, who already set up a rep office in GKC to encourage and to reach out to Chinese tech companies, especially the Guangdong high-tech company, to use Singapore as an IP hub for the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] market.

We're also working on policy innovation, in terms of market access for Singapore professional services players, to capture the growing market in China. Overall, we hope that this will enhance the entire ecosystem of our Singapore professional services sector.

So, the last part is of course the SMIC. I think many [things] have been said about this. The background is that you know, we know that Guangdong is one of the largest manufacturing hub in China, especially for the electronic manufacturing companies, and we know that Guangdong has always been the one to take the lead in terms of reform. So, they have been tasked in this 'Made in China 2025' initiative by the state government. So, we see this opportunity and therefore we band together a group of our Singapore advanced manufacturing companies. Yeah, I think SESTO will share a little bit more about this later. And together with ASB, we help the companies to set up physical presence within GKC, so that they can reach out to the market, they can know what is going on in the market and be able to provide after sales services to their companies; and be able to, you know, ride on the industry 4.0 wave and sell our advance manufacturing solution together with the Chinese company.

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So, I think in summary, this has been some of what...initiative[s] that we've been doing with ASB together so far for our companies.

Dr Limin Hee

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Now, Michael, as a member of the Singapore Manufacturing Innovation Centre, set up jointly by ASB and IES, could you share on how the centre helps to connect businesses in Singapore and China, please?

Mr Michael

Leong

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How we benefitted is, I think, it started off by a very traditional proverb, yan yu [言语], it's like zai jia kao fu mu, chu wai kao peng hou [在家靠父母, 出外靠朋友]. So, that means at home you have your parents, when you go out to... out of Singapore, you depend on your friends. So, SMIC provided exactly just that.

Other than financial support, what's important in business is called ren qi [人气 popularity among the populace] or energy. So, by banding the companies together, we move and hunt as a team, as a pack in the ever-demanding Guangzhou manufacturing hub. So that is most important for business nowadays. And much before that, there was a huge effort done [*sic* made] by the team here to make sure the companies actually have good vibes between each other, so there were numerous sessions where we all meet up, we all bond, we all find that we can work together—although it may not be directly linked—but the vibes, the feelings were all good. So, that was really one of the good success or good important thing that was done before we jumped on board.

And once you're on board, the on-boarding was also a tedious task that we happily...benefitted from, which means we do not have to do registration, fire safety, various nonsense that you may find easy to do in Singapore – you can do it over a day – but in China, it's not the same, it's not possible. So, that saved us a lot of time where we could just focus on the business.

So, ever since then, when we on-boarded and we started trading and doing business in China, we're a small company, so we do not have a

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huge team there, so which means you do not have on-going activities all day long. But having a company banding together, we whisper to each other, we share opportunities and we run together, that really built up the momentum and built up the energy that was needed to keep everybody hopeful and also excited and energetic in the market. So, I think that's really what SMIC brought to the companies working there now.

Dr Limin Hee
00:47:02

Victor, as the CEO of a biomedical company, can you share on your experience in the support that you received in entering a new market in the Guangzhou Knowledge City?

Dr Victor Li
00:47:15

The company have 32 months of history. We're [a] spin off from A*STAR, as [a] start-up. We have the technology, the scientific idea create[d] in Singapore so we call "Lion", the company "lion." We use the technology, TCR [T-cell receptor], this element like [GPS/TPS?] [unclear acronym] system for reprogramming the patient's own cell to make it target cancer and do treatment.

Singapore: Pros and Cons

00:47:45

So, we get benefit from the Singapore's position. Let's say we get this scientific idea from Singapore; we get a lot of good talent in Singapore—research; we get very good facilities in Singapore; we get very good IP protection in Singapore; we have very good business environment, and tax system in Singapore. So, we set Singapore as our headquarters and manage all our IP and do our principal research, also do all the collaboration with US, Europe, even China and Singapore public institute.

But Singapore, there's also some disadvantages, because we have a very small pool of patient[s]. For develop[ing] the product, clinical development is one of the most important parts of the business. And [if] there's a small pool of patient[s], that means you take [a] much longer time and [it will be] very expensive to develop the product. And also, Singapore there's not really a big potential market for huge investment.

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And Singapore also [has a] lack of appetite to invest in this very long-term biological [project] in private sector.

And look at it, China will provide the other advantage[s], to complement the weakness[es] we have in Singapore. So, I looked to go to China, it's a natural step, and GKC was one of the first things I hear[d] about and so we tried to see what they could offer. And I think it's naturally become, we hope, become an extension of our Singapore business.

Registering with GKC and Ascendas One Hub

00:49:35

And about 18 months ago, I start[ed] to think of contact, from the website I get them, and then later I connected to the office in...just in this building. So, we get our product, our company registered and the first impression I...with GKC and Ascendas One Hub is firstly, their layout of the building is, really suit[able for] our GMP [good manufacturing practice] manufacturing, that kind of design layout and the height of the building, this was the first thing I get. Though we, already in China, I think in Guangzhou you have a few different industrial park that can provide, they all want us to be there, but this is the one thing good. The second thing, from our believing...experience, Ascendas historically has a very good reputation for property management. That means that for a long term, you'll continue to provide [a] good environment for our business. And there's another good element about the idea of the GKC: to create a community where people can work, living, playing and learning [*sic* live, play and learn]—I mean this is a really genius idea. This is very important part of the...for our decision-making.

And I think the fourth things is because after the contact with the Ascendas team, GKC team, we feel that they will be able to provide good, more flexible services to us. So, this is why we decide to rent the place, and from the last 16 months experience, we really find our initial judgement is really right. And particularly, because for us, as a biotech company, when we started, we had to look more long term because the GMP manufacturing facility and the lab that already involved, a huge

00:51:55

capital investment for a start-up, we cannot think of very short term. We have to think long term.

And now, I have an experience for my first venture. At that time, we had our lab in Beijing, in Daxing [大兴]. It's also healthcare biotech hub. But in the evening, the whole city become dead, in the evening, and all our staff by 5.30, they [were] all rushing for the shuttle bus. So, all our staff only have, you know, though we pay them full salary, but for a research innovative kind of job, we need people to have more flexible working schedules. And if everyone plan[s] their work within eight hours, in fact their output is only 50% or 60%. But now in GKC, with this environment, we don't mind to pay all our staff full subsidy for their living just in the place.

Now, we have our staff from northern China, Beijing, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Guangzhou, all relocated, nearly. Nearly all relocated in GKC. And from now, I think, though we pay them like 120%, but I believe their output is 150% because they're all living around. Every time I visit there, we can...late evening, always have staff in our lab. (Laughter in audience)

So, I think, look, this is [a] really genius idea. I don't know why people don't copy and learn! And yes, one thing I think I have to say very frankly for Ascendas One Hub. Because when they [were] starting this business, it was not really designed for biotech. The building itself. They're really for offices. They had [the] Singapore element. And we are biotech. We have very special requirement. First of all, we need a much higher weight load factor. We need water supply and drainage. We need air treatment. We need bio-safety and waste management. We need...the electricity supply had to be very secure and much higher than what they original planned. And we need double secur[ity], not only one. We had to set up anew. And all these will be a big challenge for us also, and for Ascendas itself. And we're really very thankful for they really making a lot of effort to make this happen.

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Now the facilities since 15 months, but we [have] already [been using] our lab for five to six months already, where we produced our product [and it has] already [been] injected to humans, to our clinical trials and [our] patient[s] already benefitted. So, thank you.

Dr Limin Hee

00:54:55

Maybe by now, Nina, after you know, you shared with us the phase two plans for GKC, **you have come up with some wish list of what you wish the government can do more to support growth in projects similar to SSGKC? Do you have a wish list?**

Ms Nina Yang

00:55:14

I talked a lot about Singapore...about China['s] government. I think I should say, you know, thank you to Singapore['s] government. I think Singapore['s] government has been most supportive in the project. I think what April mentioned just now, this ye xin li shi hui [业新理事会 literally translated as council for new industries], SGCC, yeah, these are very important platform[s]. As the title of the book suggests, it's enterprise-led, but it's government-supported, and we really need that government machinery behind us to support. Because a lot of things...in these kind of projects, a lot of things don't move unless you have a meeting schedule. And when you have meeting schedule[s] with...working with the Chinese, it's often very interesting because you're writing the minutes of meeting before the meeting, and during the meeting, you basically read out the minutes of meeting. So, imagine the amount of alignment that has to be done before the meeting. And you need [a] platform like that so that you can push both side to come to an agreement.

So, I think...sometimes I think IE Singapore don't quite like to see me because I'm always asking for support. (laughs) Yeah, but I think going forward, I think we need a lot of things like wu xing [无形 not having physical form], you know, this type of support is very useful for us.

Dr Limin Hee

00:56:49

Earlier on, Victor shared with us, you know, why you, you know, found Ascendas One Hub such an attractive place to set up your business. Maybe Michael, **you can also share with us what are the motivating factors driving SESTO Robotics to set up in GKC?**

Mr Michael
Leong
00:57:11

I'm an engineer by training, right. So, when we were given the opportunity to part of GKC, I also thought, "Hey, what were the other venues or place we should consider and evaluate?" So, I actually had the fortune to go around the whole of China—various places from Chongqing to Shanghai and places. But at the end, why did we choose GKC, even when all the various government promises us huge incentive like tax reduction, some even promise[d] us cash money—I'm like "Oh, cash money?" I think at the end of the day, it is really working with people you can trust. And when we go into business, we want to do a business. We don't want to be bogged down by a lot of things on the peripheral, to work out your taxes, to be given a piece of land and not have it later and you have to fight to get electricity being turned on. So, that was really one of the reason why we said, "we are beginners in China, let us find friends, trusted friends and work together and start this first step." So, from here on, I think when we gain enough knowledge and we want to work with our friends here to actually go further and deeper into the market. That's probably why we chose GKC.

Dr Limin Hee
00:58:33

And Kok Siong, **what are the favourable conditions and strategies that has been adopted by SSGKC to attract investors to pick the city as their choice business location?**

Mr Ng Kok Siong
00:58:47

Actually I remember when I [was] first doing the investment promotions for SSGKC, I think the first company I was trying to court was Ascendas. At that time, we were still Singbridge. It was a damn tough job because I only had one beautiful picture. I think it was came [*sic done*] up by most likely ID [interior designer], RSP [Architects], you know. Some of those artists' impressions. And that's it.

And then...that was a very, very difficult time, but luckily you know, through the effort of Mr Lim Chee Onn, you know, and the team working very hard and we managed to secure Ascendas. I think now, GKC has entered into a very different phase, alright, and in terms of favourable conditions, I think there are many. It is so attractive that I myself may find it hard to come back to Singapore in future. (Laughter in audience)

Investing in China

00:59:52

Now, I don't know whether you all heard about in China, there are now only two places [which] you should go [to] for your investment. The first one is Xiongan Xin Qu [雄安新区], Xiongan New District, which is still very much under planning. I think President Xi Jinping just went through the plan during the Chinese New Year. The next one—which is the most promising one—is actually the...they call it the Yue-Gang-Ao Da Wan Qu [粤港澳大湾区]. It's Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area. Alright, how big is the size? Actually, we're talking about a 43,000 square kilometre, we're talking about populations of 65 million, and...oh, the GDP 4.4, 1.4 billion...no, trillion. 1.4 US trillion. So, it is a very, very huge area and we GKC, is actually in the isometric centre of the entire Greater Bay Area. This is in terms of the market access and market potential.

Now, we talk about infrastructure provision. I think Nina has introduced. Other than the subway system, which already comprehensive enough, we have the subway link all the way to Baiyun International Airport, to the city centre. We have an inter-city rail that is connecting ourselves to Hong Kong within one hour. And on top of it, recently they added four fast speed subways, or fast speed trains, it's just like the Hong Kong airport express. Eight minutes to Baiyun Airport, 12 minutes to the new airport, 12 minutes to the Tianhe town centre, and about 30 minutes to Nansha. So, this is in terms of the infrastructure.

In terms of government support, I think we had trial and error for a while, and recently the local government had come out many incentive[s]. They call it the Golden Ten. We have four set[s] of Golden Ten. Huang jin shi tiao [黄金十条] to promote advance manufacturing—so some of our friends here, I think, you all definitely will enjoy it; service sector RHQ [regional headquarter]; and also high tech industry. And also two sets of mei yu shi tiao [美玉十条], they call it the Emerald Ten. To

01:02:30

encourage talent, talent attractions and also IP. Okay, these are in terms of government incentives support.

If you talk about the environment, I think GKC is touted as one of the best, okay, in terms of Guangzhou. In terms of the air quality, we have two...we are actually sited within two mountain ranges. On the left is Maofeng Shan [帽峰山], on the right is Fuhe Shan [浮河山]. You see, when you go to a country like New Zealand, you know, I think a lot of my Chinese counterpart will always tell me, you know, hao shan, hao shui, hao ji mo [好山, 好水, 好寂寞, [good mountain and water views but very lonely] you know? We have...(laughter in audience)

And then they...when you talk about China, okay, a lot of time, they talk about, zhen zang, zheng luan, zhen re nao [真脏, 真乱, 真热闹 really dirty, really chaotic, but really vibrant]. So, what we're trying to create for GKC is hao shan, hao shui, hao re nao [好山, 好水, 好热闹 good mountain and water views and very vibrant], you know. This is the...actually the eventual stage we want to create for GKC. I always tell my friend: Singapore is not a so-called technology powerhouse, but we are a very good aggregator; we are able to put together all the hardware, all the software, all the intangibles and make the city very liveable. And that's why we have been focusing not only on the physical development, which the Chinese are very good. Okay, the road, infrastructure, they are also very good. We have been focussing a lot on IP, intellectual property – actually we were the first one who brought it up and they took it and now the IP protections are there. Good school, okay, I think they have recognised [that] a good school is very important, so we have now two or three top tier school[s] in GKC. And of course, over and above it, we managed to get the Hwa Chong International to “set up shops” there also. So, this is in terms of the softer aspect of it and the environment.

01:04:32

So, I think the list can go on, but in terms of favourable condition[s], there are many. And more importantly, I think the money is there. Okay, I think some of my friend here should be able to testify, right? Steven is on there, you know. He was talking to me, I was trying to invest in the company to buy some stake. Before he...I realised it, actually he said, "Okay, round A all fully taken up, I'm sorry." So, there are a lot of venture capital and funds moving around. For new idea[s], new concept[s], new start-ups. The whole ecosystem is very, very vibrant; and this is something that Singapore is lacking. I think we have very good start-up[s], good ideas, but in terms of the commercialisation of it, I think we're a little bit lacking. But it is a very matured market in China, in GKC. So, with that, I think I encourage those who want to "set up shops", come to us, alright, I think you won't be disappointed.

Dr Limin Hee

01:05:34

Okay, now that Kok Siong has made such a wonderful pitch for GKC, I have to throw the session to the audience for your questions. Please introduce yourself and keep your questions short so that we could ask the panellists to respond.

AUD 1

01:05:55

Thank you for your presentation and happy Chinese New Year. I'm Vanketesh from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. I really liked your branding of the project: enterprise-led, government-supported. I found that the word 'sustainable' is missing somewhere. Because it's a buzzword, I found it missing. But you were talking about government wants employment, the private sector wants economic viability. **But who's thinking about the society and environment? Who are the champions for that? How are you including those stakeholders in your planning process?** That's one.

And second, you...I want to know **what are the intangible costs and intangible benefits related to society and environment, and have they been taken into account, factored in the planning process? And how much of the project costs are you earmarking for society and environment?** Thank you.

Dr Limin Hee
01:06:46

Who are the stakeholders for sustainable environment in the GKC, and what are the intangible costs to society, and has that been taken care of? Would any of the panellists...? Maybe Nina? Yeah, okay.

Ms Nina Yang
01:07:01

I think...we didn't spend a lot to talk about the original masterplan and a lot of the original narratives of the Guangzhou Knowledge City when it was mooted, but I think...Victor alluded to it. I think it was master planned very much as a[n] integrated development. The whole GKC is actually 123 square kilometres, with a population of half a million. And it is actually conceived as a[n] integrated development, a new city centre, aside from the downtown Guangzhou.

Sustainability: Planning and Environmental

01:07:37

So, in terms of sustainability from planning and environmental...from planning point of view, this is a very important premise, which is it is created so that you can live there, you can have companies "setting up shop" there, and all your amenities like hospitals, schools, they're all solved within the 123 square kilometres. And so, this is a very important consideration, we are not expecting people to move daily from downtown to come here. Eventually it must have its own population working **within** GKC. So, this is from planning point of view, the sustainability.

On environmental point of view, I think in the video we have showed that it is actually a three zone: north, centre and south. And it is straddled between two mountain ranges. We did not touch the mountain ranges. We also have three green belt[s] that straddle between the three zones—actually, two green belts that straddle between the two zones, so that we can allow biodiversity to cross between the two mountain ranges. And in the traffic planning, we have consciously kept the expressway to two side[s] of the master plan, and we have only kept major arterial within the centre. So, in terms of environmental, there was a lot of consideration, in terms of...from the water aspect, there's some water management; on the terrain aspect, you can see because I think it's a trademark of Mr Liu [Thai Ker]. You

01:09:24

don't see [a] grid city. You don't see [a] parallel grid city. A lot of roads meanders around following the terrain. So, from [the] environmental point of view, I think we don't really have like Tianjin Eco-City['s] 23 sustainability KPIs and all that, but it is very in-built in the original master plan and the thinking of the master plan.

Key Stakeholders in Master Plan

01:09:50

So, in terms of who is the stakeholder, I think it's both. The government buy into the master plan. Of course, over the years with the three party secs and the how many district [leaders] who [tried] to be master planner[s], they have adulterated the master plan. I think you have seen how the master plan has changed. But we have, at least within our start-up area, in the south start-up area, been very true to the original master plan of Mr Liu.

And so, as far as the Chinese, I think they're also learning. They have in their subsequent versions of their master plan also reverted to some of the original thinking of the master plan. As far as we as a private sector, we have also sort of respect[ed] the master plan, and of course, when the master plan was conceived, the commercial aspect was very much part of the thinking. I mean it cannot be just a master plan without understanding the commercial viability.

Yeah. So, I don't know whether I answered your question on the stakeholder. As to how much it is spent on sustainability and how much is spent...I'm not sure whether we have done a very clear computation. I don't know whether Kok Siong will want to add on to that.

Mr Ng Kok Siong
01:11:09

I think there's one part in terms of the social elements of it. I think it has been the government's intentions, alright, to also...if you want to...I mean that is more in the social element of it, alright. I mean other than the Tai He Guan [太和观 Thye Hwa Kwan Moral Society], which we tried to bring in to provide some family service centre[s], the government [is] also trying to create employment, to upgrade the skill[s] of the locals,

01:11:40

the villages especially, who were unsettled [*sic* resettled], and to be also part of the GKC.

Just to let you know, currently the... all my cleaners, mechanic[s] and most of the maid[s] in the office are all from the villages. But you don't [*sic* should not] think that they are poor. Actually, all of them are very rich because the compensation quantum is very generous. Okay, a lot of them...their problem is not that they don't have the money to settle anywhere, no. Their problem is how many houses I will want to buy, you know, in the new apartment, and how much compensation I want to get. Yeah, duo da [多大 literally "how big?"], you know. How big is the size? The villages were...actually in terms of the happiness index, are all very high. (Laughter in audience)

Okay, they refuse to move, refuse to be relocated, because they want to be there to bargain with the government. There are no so-called compulsory acquisitions. Government, although they have the right, is all...more by negotiation. So, the whole acquisition, resettlement process is very slow, but it made the villagers very rich now actually.

AUD 2

01:12:56

Good afternoon, my name is Zung[?] from CPG Consultants. I have a question for Ms Nina Yang. So, you used to work in consultancy, doing master planning, and now you work on the implementation side, right? **Could you share with us, now when you look back at this, the master plan of this project, what are [the] areas you think you can do differently, so that you can create a more conducive environment for the business?** Especially, you're talking a lot about creating an ecosystem for different business, different industries, right? And that part is really I find that very difficult, at the consultancy stage, to get clear answers.

Ms Nina Yang

01:13:39

I think for me...actually what I realised very, very strongly is in the end, real estate is about location, location, location. I think when we...when we ah, because we were...yeah. When I was a consultant, the client always [came] to you from a piece of land faraway, and then you were supposed to make it [the] centre of the world, the best piece of land you

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can ever dream of. But in the end, the economics of location is something we cannot ignore. I think this is very strongly...I feel it very strongly, especially when we're trying to build the industry ecosystem. In the end, it's about connectivity, it is about location, it is about [the] readiness of the talent pipeline, it's about—to some extent—policies. I think, I'm referring to China. Outside China, it may be different, but in China, it is really talent pipeline and locations.

So, would I change anything in the master plan? I don't think so. I think the principles of the master plan, they are like your planning 101, these are good principles. I think the fact that we're trained, being put in a Singapore environment, there are very strong planning principles that we are imbued in in Singapore. These are good principles that we should continue to carry out in our work. But I think, in terms of a piece of master plan, for [sic from] a developer's point of view, location is always very important. And the majority of the infrastructure is always key. Because no other places build infrastructure like the way we do in Singapore. If the line will come in 2020, it will come in 2020. But you know, anywhere else outside, the line will come in 2014, but it never come[s], and when it does come in 2019, it takes a different path, and it can change your master plan altogether.

Dr Limin Hee
01:15:45

Okay, if not, I'm going to ask the panellists to each **share with us what you would like to see in the GKC in the next 10 to 20 years?** So, a brief remark about what you'd like to see, you know, aside from what Nina already showed us. I'm sure there are some things you haven't showed us, so what would you like to see? Maybe starting with you, Dr Li? And then we'll go down the line and end with Nina.

Dr Victor Li
01:16:15

Okay. As I said, the Singapore...the GKC site for us is like our business extension. That means they are more in the manufacturing, clinical trial and the commercialisation. So, what I look at it from now, they [are] starting this kind of concept planning, and though it is still in the early stage, there's still not so many crowd yet in the place, **but we'll see that will happen with what the IP examination centre and other companies**

01:16:55

start[ing to be] operational. So, that will create a good community that is really in the high-tech industry.

And from there, I can see that in the future, 10 or 20 years' time, it more looks like [a] Singapore kind of environment. Yeah, that's what I hope that will be there. The good things. Yeah, so then we [will be] more willing to go there. And now the fact is that we can attract a lot of talent from different place[s], and also some Singapore graduate[s] do work there. So, it's already some of the...I think the element already attracted people.

Mr Michael Leong
01:17:32

So, our background is that we...other than SESTO Robotics, the parent company, HOPE Technik, does a lot of other robotics stuff, fire trucks. So, where we want, hope to leverage on GKC in future is that it could be a super vibrant financial economy, where we can bring our IP from Singapore and prototypes in Guangzhou as a platform, [and] from there reach out to the whole of China. So, that will probably require a lot of recognition as a IP hub, recognition as a venture hub, so where Singaporeans can bring, like us, bring all the inventions that we created here, to a bigger market in China. That will be my wish list.

Ms April Oh
01:18:18

10 to 20 years is [a] very long time to plan for, but I think we really hope to see GKC becoming a vibrant city that adopts Singapore's work, live and play concept, with a lot more Singapore DNA. And with the increasing connectivity, especially the location of GKC itself being situated in the centre of Guangzhou City, we hope that GKC will become the hub that connects Singapore to the Greater Bay Area, which is really the next area of opportunity for businesses and commercial activities. So, I think to achieve that, for the next three to five years, I think we'll work closely with ASB and the GKC team to bring in more industry focus based on Singapore's strength as well as what Guangdong currently needs. So, a few areas like modern services in healthcare, education and IP arbitration, and also in terms of advance manufacturing, technology and innovation, and as well as start-ups.

01:19:14

So, these are few sectors that we feel that Singapore can continue to contribute [to] and can value-add further to Guangdong's development and will bring much value to GKC's development.

Mr Ng Kok Siong
01:19:22

I think I will just share the vision [which was] actually stipulated by some of the leader[s]—especially Vice-Premier, the then party sec, Wang Yang, alright. So, I hope the government can adopt a more steady pace, okay, like what he has set out. He said, “Ning que cu lan, ning man cu kuai, cong rong jian she.” [“宁缺勿滥 宁慢勿快 从容建设” “Better to have shortage, than to have the wrong thing, better to be slow than to rush, and to become established in such an environment”]. In other words, **quality than quantity, do not rush, build at [a] steady pace**. So, this is actually his reminder to the local government, okay, this is a precious project, do not rush.

And what we're going to see for GKC? He once told his guests, all the international guests, “Yao kan guo qu de Guangzhou, qing kan Lizhi Wan; yao kan xian dai de Guangzhou, qing dao Zhujian Xin Cheng; yao kan wei lai de Guangzhou, qing dao Zhishi Cheng” [“要看过去的广州，请到荔枝湾。要看现代的广州，请到珠江新城。要看未来的广州，请到知识城。” “To see old Guangzhou, go to Lizhi Bay, to see modern Guangzhou, go to Zhujiang New City; to see Guangzhou of the future, got to Knowledge City.”] **In other words, (applause from audience) he had set Guangzhou Knowledge City to be the future of Guangzhou.** Thanks.

Ms Nina Yang
01:20:35

I think two aspect[s]. I really want to—not a marketing pitch again—but **I really want to encourage more Singapore companies to come with us**. For one, I've been told to say that in SMIC, we like to have more Singapore companies to come. In the SMIC platform, we actually have headcounts within the SMIC to help the Singapore companies. So, you're not just there, we're leaving you there to, you know, run on your own. We actually curate the companies together; we do a lot of activities together. So, I think—not advertising—but I really, really hope that we can have more Singapore companies with us. That we can create

01:21:17

a sort of relatively safe haven for Singapore companies to venture out of Singapore.

Because Singapore, we're such a small country, I mean I turn back, every time we go for the IE mission, it's always the same companies. And when you encounter the Chinese company[ies], the Indian company[ies], they're huge! And I always have this question burning that what value can we add in [the] future? You know, as a Singapore company, what value can we add? **So, we have to be out there, we have to be out there fighting the war, fighting the war together, so that we continue to find the value proposition that we create.** I mean, in GKC, we use to think master planning is what we can give. You know, today master planning is a hygiene factor. You know, don't talk about master planning. They can do even better master planning than us.

Then what can we add value? It's really our value system. You know, the kind of attention we put towards when we say we want to get a task done, we will by hook or by crook get it done; the kind of support system that we have. And really, I think I would really like to encourage, whether it's China or, I say a little bit further, India, that more of Singapore companies [will] come together with us. So, that's what I want to see in GKC in this kind of master development platform that we do overseas. This is on one aspect. And on the other aspect, of course what we have done in GKC is only the start-up area. It's only a 6.27 out of the 123 square kilometre[s]. So, of course, what do I want to see? **I want to be able to do more outside the start-up area.** I think we have laboured for the last nine years, or eight years, creating the hardest part, you know. Everything that sunk underground and that rose above; and now we have people; and now we're creating the community in there. This is now recognised as a shiny example of what Guangdong should move to in the future.

So, of course we want to do more, we want to do more outside the start-up area. Outside the start-up area, I think we have different challenges.

Outside the start-up area, I think they have a lot of resettlement issue[s] because I think somehow in China, they cannot do resettlement like the way we do in Singapore. You resettle and then you keep your master plan confidential, nobody know[s] what you're going to do. Here you have to have your masterplan exhibited and then after that, it's very difficult to resettle.

So, I think in the phase two, outside the start-up area, the development model will be very different. We have to engage the local[s] a lot more. As Kok Siong say, they're actually not poor, they want...now...to be skin in the game, they also want to join us to be able to benefit from the growth of the city. So, I think that would be a very different kind of experience. And as you saw in the video, at the end of the video, we say that GKC is now being touted for elevation to a **state-level project**. Well, there's a lot of argument. It's not G-to-G, it's state level, there's some fine definition that it's not a G-to-G but state level. But never mind, being lifted...if we ever get that state elevation through, I think we would want to start the development outside the start-up area. And I think that would be a very exciting phase, if we can be involved.

Yeah. So, that's my dream for GKC.

[Dr Limin Hee](#)
01:25:07

So, thank you for all your frank and candid sharing. You've been a wonderful and very witty panel.

[Transcript ends at 01:25:17]

LECTURE INFORMATION

TITLE

Enterprise-Led, Government-Supported, Market-Driven Collaboration Model: Sino-Singapore Guangzhou knowledge City (*Launch of Urban System Studies: Guangzhou Knowledge City: A New Paradigm in Collaboration*)

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MODERATOR

Dr Limin Hee

Director, Research, Centre for Liveable Cities

DATE

26 February 2018

LOCATION

MND Auditorium

DURATION

1 Hour 25 Minutes 23 Seconds

Note:

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