



Panel on:
Stronger Together Voluntary Metropolitan Coordination Across Local Boundaries on SDGs and Governance - Cases from Europe and Asia

Strategies for enhancing cross boundary governance to develop a sustainable technology and finance innovation hub in China's Greater Bay Area

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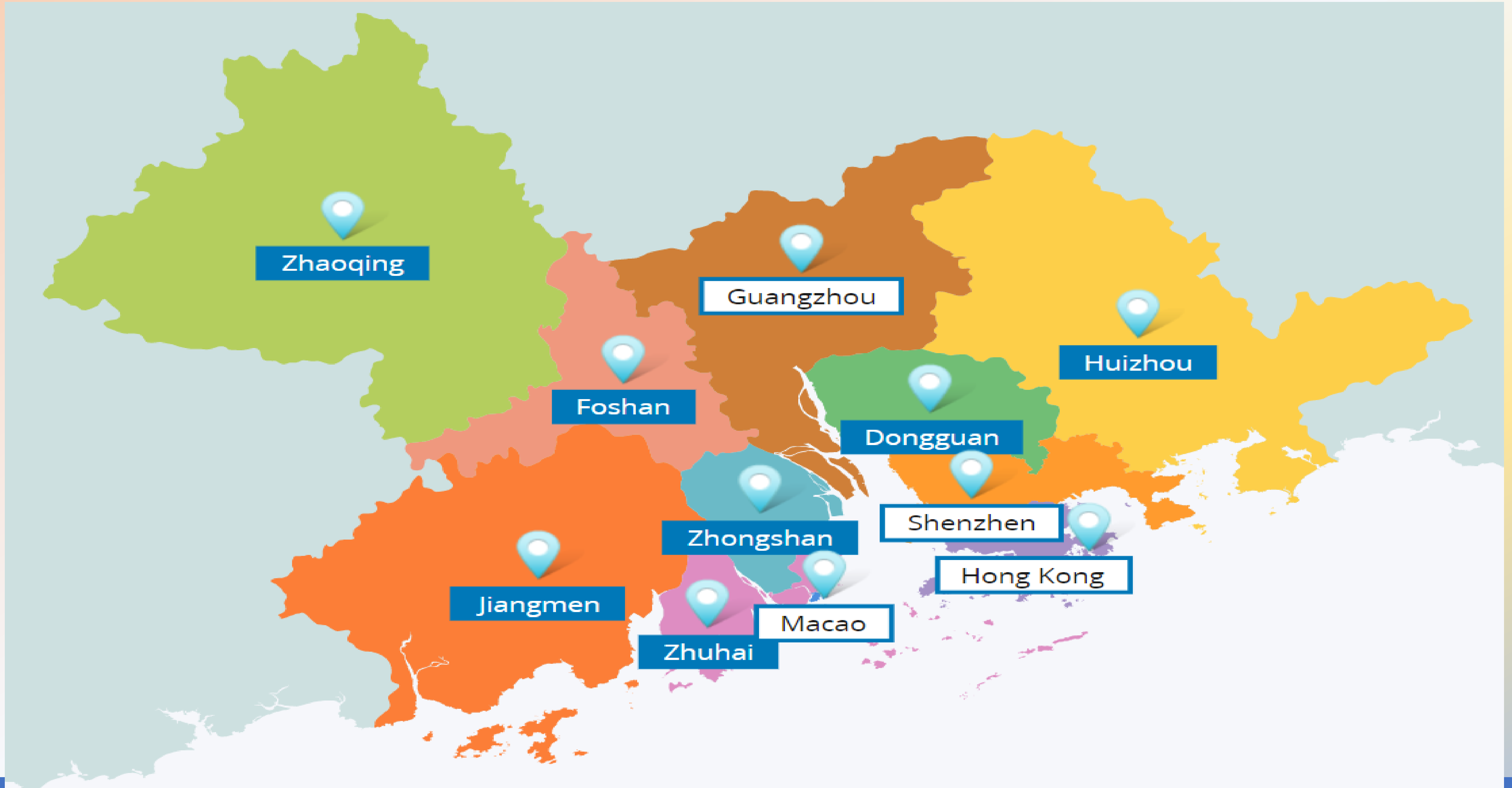
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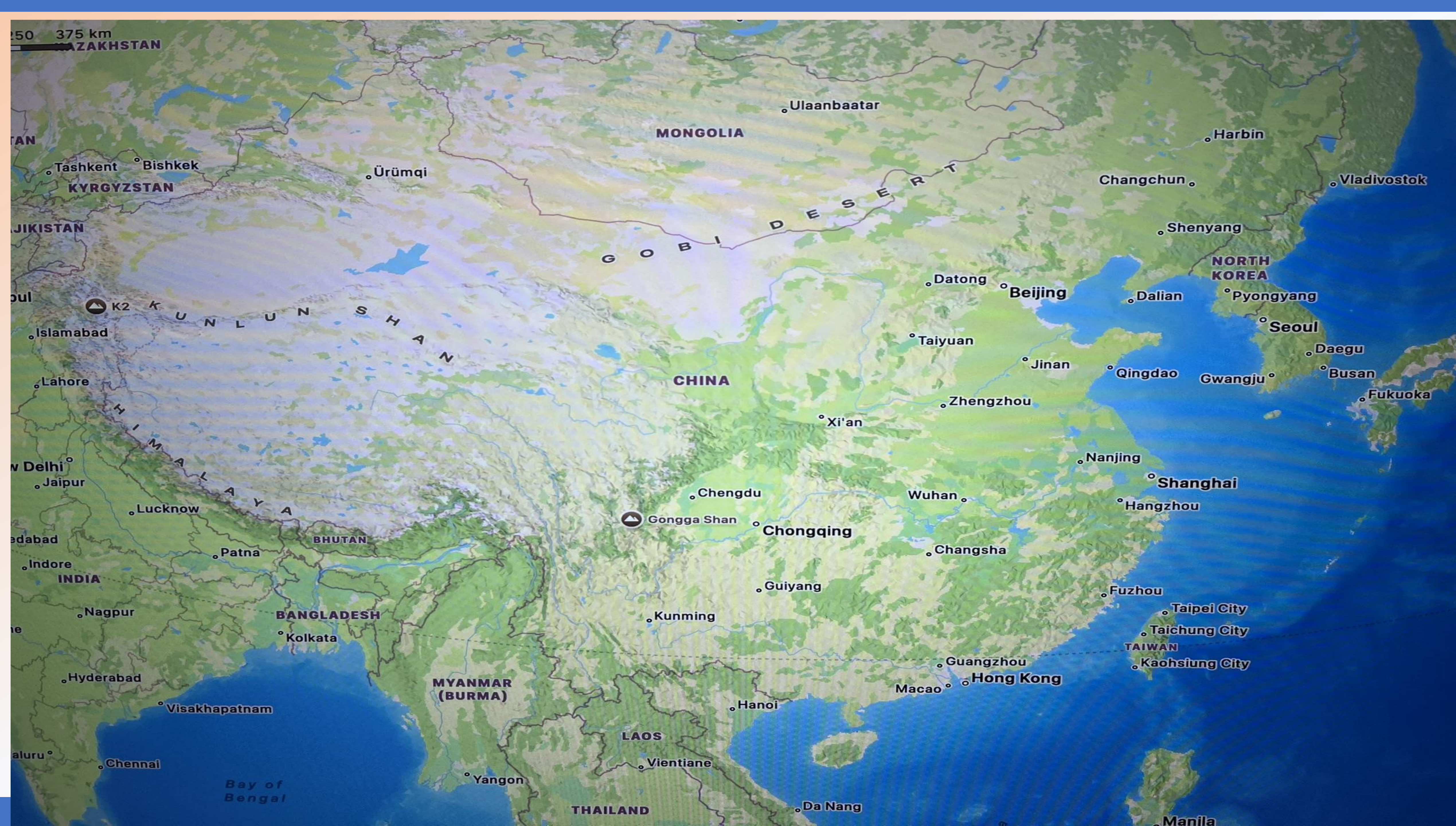
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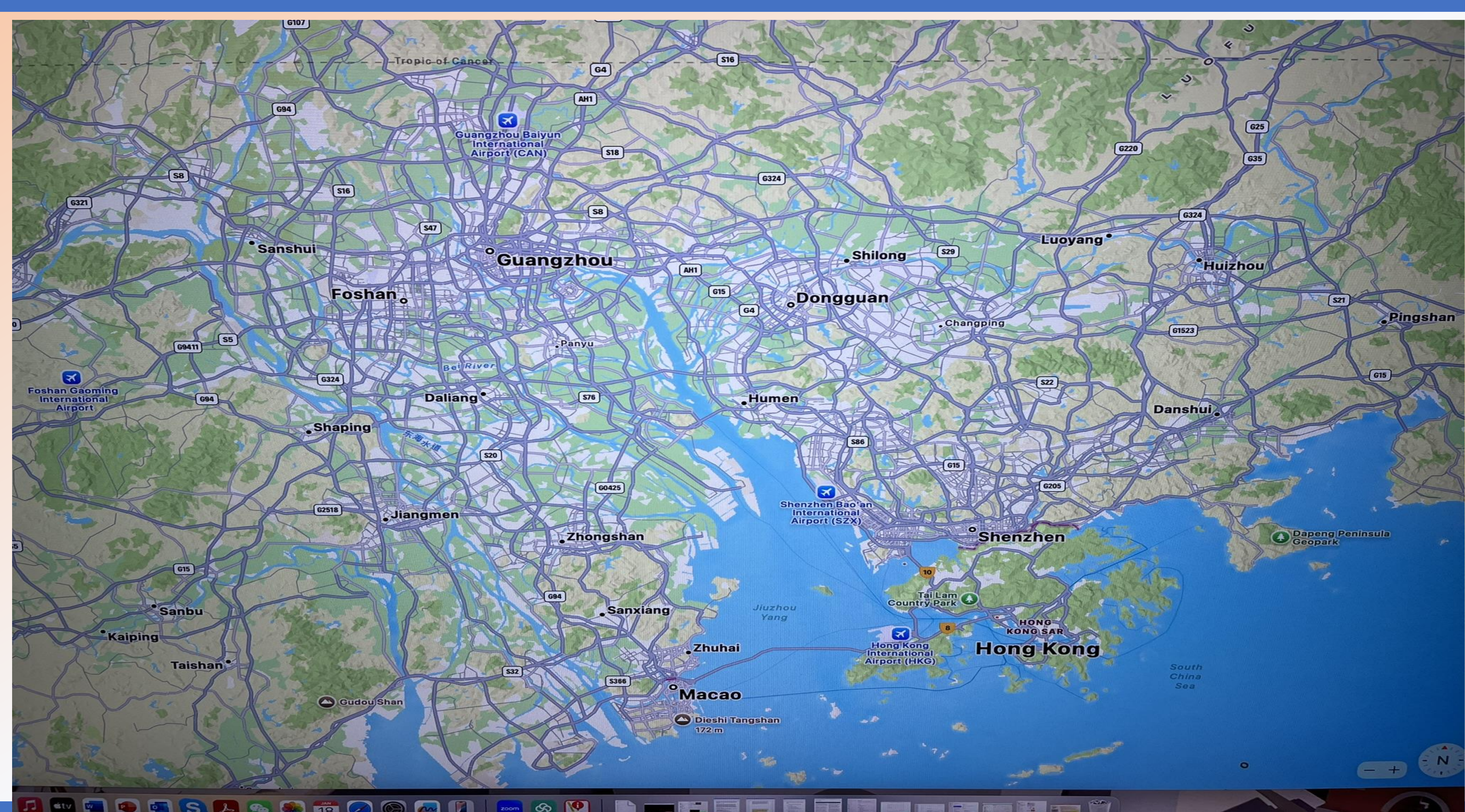
Presentation Outline

1. The Location of China's Greater Bay Area
2. Background of the GBA
3. Goal, Objectives, Mission, and Strategies
4. Policy Measures to Facilitate Cross Boundary Movements
5. Comparison with Other Bay Areas
6. Case Study: A. Hong Kong
7. Case Study: B. Shenzhen
8. Summary and Conclusion

1. Location of China's Greater Bay Area







2. Background

The Area cover

Hong Kong and Macao **2 SARs, and 9 cities**: Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Huizhou, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen and Zhaoqing in Guangdong Province – Total land area: **56,000 Sq.Km**

An Enormous market

A population of **88 million** consumers (2023)

A collective **GDP of US \$1.9 trillion** (2023)

Key Objective

To develop into an **International Technology and Financial hub**

Main Strengths of GBA

Outstanding capabilities in scientific R&D and commercialization

Home to world-renowned universities, scientific research institutes, high-tech enterprises and large-scale national scientific projects



2. Background

1. On 1 July 2017, witnessed by President Xi Jinping, the National Development and Reform Commission and the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao signed the [Framework Agreement on Deepening Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Cooperation in the Development of the Greater Bay Area in Hong Kong](#).
2. The Outline Development Plan for the GBA was announced in February 2019. The goals are expected to be achieved by 2035.
3. The Strategy is an important component of the “Belt and Road Initiative”.
4. The goal is to develop the GBA into the most open, market-oriented and innovative pole of economic growth in China.

2. Background

5. A major national development strategy that President Xi Jinping has planned, deployed and promoted, reflecting the strong determination and ambition of the Chinese government.

6. A common endeavour of the government and the community- The market, private enterprises and professional communities will play a critical role.

7. A joint effort of the central and local governments to enhance the competitiveness of the region through economic integration, complementary advantages and division of labour.

8. The GBA covers the South China region and will become a powerful driving force for China's overall development.

3. Goal, Objectives, Mission, and Strategies

Goal

- The goal is to develop the GBA into a powerhouse for sustainable finance, innovation, and technology hub.
- It will lead in cutting-edge research, financial services, and technological advancements.
- It positions strategically in blending the international and mainland Chinese business environments.

Objectives

1. Strengthen the cooperation amongst Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.
2. Promote coordinated regional economic development.
3. Facilitate in-depth integration in the Pearl River Delta region to build a world class Bay Area.
4. To offer a high quality of life for its residents, provide attractive opportunities for businesses, and serve as a hub for innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship.
5. The GBA aims to create an environment where people can live, work, and travel conveniently and comfortably.

Mission

- . A new attempt to break new ground in pursuing opening up on all fronts
- . A further step in taking forward the practice of "One Country, Two Systems"

Basic Principles

- . 1. To be driven by innovation and led by reform
- . 2. To coordinate development and plan holistically
- . 3. To pursue green development and ecological conservation
- . 4. To open up and cooperate and achieve a win-win outcome
- . 5. To share the benefits of development and improve people's livelihood
- . 6. To adhere to "One Country, Two Systems" and act in accordance with the law

Development Strategies

1. Coordinating City and Regional Plan
2. Division of Roles Based on Strengths
3. Integrated Development
4. Efficient Resource Allocation
5. Infrastructure Planning and Connectivity
5. Policy Consistency and Harmonization
6. Ecological conservation & Sustainable Development
7. A quality living circle for living, working and travelling

Governments' Challenges in Strategy Implementation

1. Legal and Regulatory differences between the cities
2. Data Privacy and Security Concerns
3. Technological Infrastructure and Interoperability
4. Resistance to Change and Capacity Building
5. Coordination and Collaboration Amongst Government Agencies
6. Financial Resources and Investments

4. Policy Measures to Facilitate Cross Boundary Movements

- Simplifying Cross-Border Procedures through Information Technology
- The Hong Kong SAR Government has been actively reflecting Hong Kong people's wishes to relevant Mainland authorities for greater convenience for Hong Kong people studying, working, and living in the Mainland.
- On 6 November 2019, the Central Government promulgated [16 main policy measures](#) to benefit Hong Kong people and facilitate the development of various sectors in the GBA.

Main Policy Measures

A. Citizen centric - Benefiting the general public

- . 1. Hong Kong residents to be treated as local residents in purchasing properties in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area;
- . 2. supporting the use of mobile electronic payment by Hong Kong residents on the Mainland;
- . 3. Pilot scheme for Hong Kong residents to open Mainland personal bank accounts in the Greater Bay Area remotely by attestation;
- . 4. Ensuring that the children of Hong Kong and Macao residents working in Guangdong enjoy the same education as those of Mainland residents;
- . 5. Exploring the establishment of a cross-boundary wealth management scheme;
- . 6. Foreigners holding Hong Kong Permanent Identity Cards to be able to apply to the relevant Mainland authorities for a visa or permission for residence with a validity of up to two to five years to stay or reside in Mainland cities in the Greater Bay Area;
- . 7. Permitting the use of Hong Kong-registered drugs and common medical devices in designated Hong Kong-owned healthcare institutions in the Greater

Main Policy Measures

B. Supporting professional services

- . 8. Relaxation on partnership associations by Hong Kong and Mainland law firms, employment of Hong Kong legal consultants and [practice of Hong Kong legal practitioners in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area](#);
- . 9. Further extending the scope of mutual recognition of qualifications for construction professionals;
- . 10. Expanding the scope of liberalisation measures for construction professionals from Hong Kong and Macao to practice on the Mainland;
- . 11. Preferential treatment on insurance regulation;
- . 12. Removing the requirement on years of operating experience for Hong Kong service suppliers to provide insurance loss adjusting services on the Mainland;
- . 13. Supporting Mainland insurers to issue catastrophe bonds in Hong Kong and Macao by relaxing the requirements for establishing special purpose insurers;

Main Policy Measures

C. Promoting Sustainable Innovation and Technology

- . 14. Supporting the development of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Co-operation Zone;
- . 15. Facilitating customs clearance of imported animal-derived biomaterials; and
- . 16. Relaxing the limitation on exporting Mainland human genetic resources to Hong Kong and Macao.

Other Policy Measures

D. Start-up / Business / Work

- . Starting from 1 January 2019, an individual who has no domicile and has resided in the Mainland for an annual aggregate of 183 days or more for less than six consecutive years, shall, upon filing records with the relevant tax authorities, not be required to pay [individual income tax](#) with respect to his/her income derived from sources outside the Mainland and paid by institutions or individuals outside the Mainland. If an individual has resided in the Mainland for an annual aggregate of 183 days or more but during which there is a single absence from the Mainland for more than 30 days, the continuous years of residence in the Mainland with an annual aggregate of 183 days or more shall be recounted;
- . [The requirement for the people of Hong Kong and Macao to apply for employment permits for working in the Mainland has been removed](#);
- . Hong Kong and Macao people working in the Mainland can join the [Housing Provident Fund](#) and enjoy the same treatment accorded to Mainland residents in terms of base deposit, deposit ratio, processing procedures, as well as the drawing of money from the Housing Provident Fund, and the application for personal housing loans under the Housing Provident Fund, etc. People from Hong Kong/Macao leaving the Mainland to relocate back to Hong Kong/Macao will be allowed to withdraw any remaining balance in their Housing Provident Fund accounts, thereby facilitating them to plan for the longer term and achieve personal goals;
- . Eligible Hong Kong and Macao residents can take part in the [qualification accreditation examinations for primary and secondary school teachers](#);
- . Eligible Hong Kong and Macao tour guides and tour escorts [may work in Hengqin New District](#); and

Other Policy Measures

E. Education and Study

- . It is specified in clear terms that to protect the rights and interests of Hong Kong and Macao students, Mainland higher education institutions and relevant authorities must accord equal treatment for Hong Kong and Macao students in admission, nurture, management and supporting services;
- . Mainland higher education institutions should facilitate Hong Kong and Macao students' job search and employment and issue Employment Agreements and Employment Registration Certificates to them upon their graduation;
- . Both the quota and amount of [scholarships open to Hong Kong and Macao students as well as overseas Chinese students](#) studying at Mainland higher education institutions have been increased;
- . The Guangzhou Municipal Education Bureau has approved the Guangdong Overseas Chinese High School to enroll children of Hong Kong and Macao;
- . The [Education Bureau of Yuexiu District](#) of Guangzhou in April 2019 accepted, on trial for one year, children of eligible Hong Kong and Macao residents with residence permit to apply for admission to Yuexiu District primary school first grade or high school first grade; and
- . Children of eligible Hong Kong residents may enjoy the [same education arrangement](#) as local students in Huizhou starting 1 January 2020. The arrangement is valid for five years

Other Policy Measures

F. Daily Living

- . Hong Kong residents living in the Mainland who meet the relevant criteria can apply for [residence permits](#). A residence permit holder is entitled to enjoy, in accordance with the law, three categories of rights, six basic public services and nine facilitation measures in the place where he or she is residing. This covers areas relating to **daily living including employment, education, medical care, travel, financial services**, etc.;
- . The People's Government of Shenzhen Municipality announced on 21 August 2019 the [expansion in the scope of facilitation measures for senior citizens](#) who have reached the age of 60. Hong Kong and Macao residents living in Shenzhen who are holders of residence permit are also eligible. Shenzhen is the sixth Greater Bay Area mainland city after Dongguan, Huizhou, Zhuhai, Foshan and Jiangmen to offer free public transports to Hong Kong senior citizens;
- . The [interim measures](#) announced on 29 November 2019 stipulated rules for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan residents working, doing business, living or studying in the Mainland to join the local social insurance scheme. The interim measures took effect on 1 January 2020; and
- . The China Railway Corporation has installed automatic ticket vending and issuing machines to read and verify Home Visit Re-entry Permits at train stations of various provinces and cities with relatively large demand for ticketing services from Hong Kong people. This can reduce the amount of time otherwise spent on queuing over the counter.

Recent Measures to Reduce Barriers between Cities

1. In June 2023, Cyberspace Administration of China and HK' Innovation, Technology & Industry Bureau signed a MOU to establish rules for data transfer within the GBA under China's data security framework. This helps build HK into a global data hub.
2. Industries like smartphone, AI, biomedicine, new energy and new materials will elevate the GBA into the knowledge economy stage.
3. I&T materials, capital, data & people are interconnected to build HK as an international city.
4. In March 2023, HK signed several agreements with other city governments on I&T, finance, smart city development, and regulations of pharmaceutical and medical devices.

Recent Measures to Reduce Barriers between Cities

5. Guangdong province has introduced a preferential individual tax subsidy for foreign talent living in the GBA.
6. The development of the Northern Metropolis between the border of HK and Shenzhen will further drive the integration of HK with Shenzhen and the GBA.
7. Shenzhen-Zhongshan bridge opened on 30 June 2024 and other high speed rail routes will make every destination in the GBA ecosystem accessible within an hour's commute, call it a "One hour living circle".

Recent Measures to Reduce Barriers between Cities

8. Remove stringent restrictions on Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and increase "Hong Kong cars going north" and "Macau cars going north" making a remarkable growth of cars using it.
9. Consider the GBA as a Free Trade Cooperation Zone to further open up to a high level for economic growth and promote free flow of goods, capital, personnel, and services.
10. Allow non-Chinese permanent Hong Kong residents to get a 5-year visiting pass to enter the mainland.
11. Grant over 50 countries' citizens to visit and stay for 144 hours in mainland China without the need to apply for a visa.

Recent Measures to Reduce Barriers between Cities

12. Propose to extend cross border customs clearance time and full implementation of "Two inspections in one place".
13. Unified personal income tax policy for world-class talents.
14. Promote "Hong Kong-funded and Hong Kong-based arbitration" for enterprises in commercial dispute resolution.
15. Deepen regional collaboration, integration, trade facilitation, and economic development in the GBA.
16. More initiatives are developed to enhance connectivity and infrastructure within the GBA.

5. Comparison of World's Bay Areas (2021)

	① Guangdong-HK-Macao GBA	② Tokyo Bay Area	③ New York Bay Area	④ San Francisco Bay Area
Area (km2)	56,098	36,898	17,312	17,887
Population (mn)	86.7	44.4	19.3	7.7
GDP (US\$ tn)	1.7	2.0	1.8	1.0
Services Industry as % in GDP	65%	85%	77%	73%
Key Industries	Finance, Technology, Professional services & Manufacturing	Automobiles, Petroleum & Finance	Finance, Real Estate, Medical & Healthcare	Technology & Professional Services

資料來源：貿發局-世界主要灣區基本數字 (2021年)、中國粵港澳大灣區改革創新報告(2020)

Comparison of China and USA Bay Areas

China - GBA

Hong Kong & Shenzhen

Finance & Technology

Developing

USA - Bay Areas

New York

San Francisco

Finance

Technology

Matured

Matured

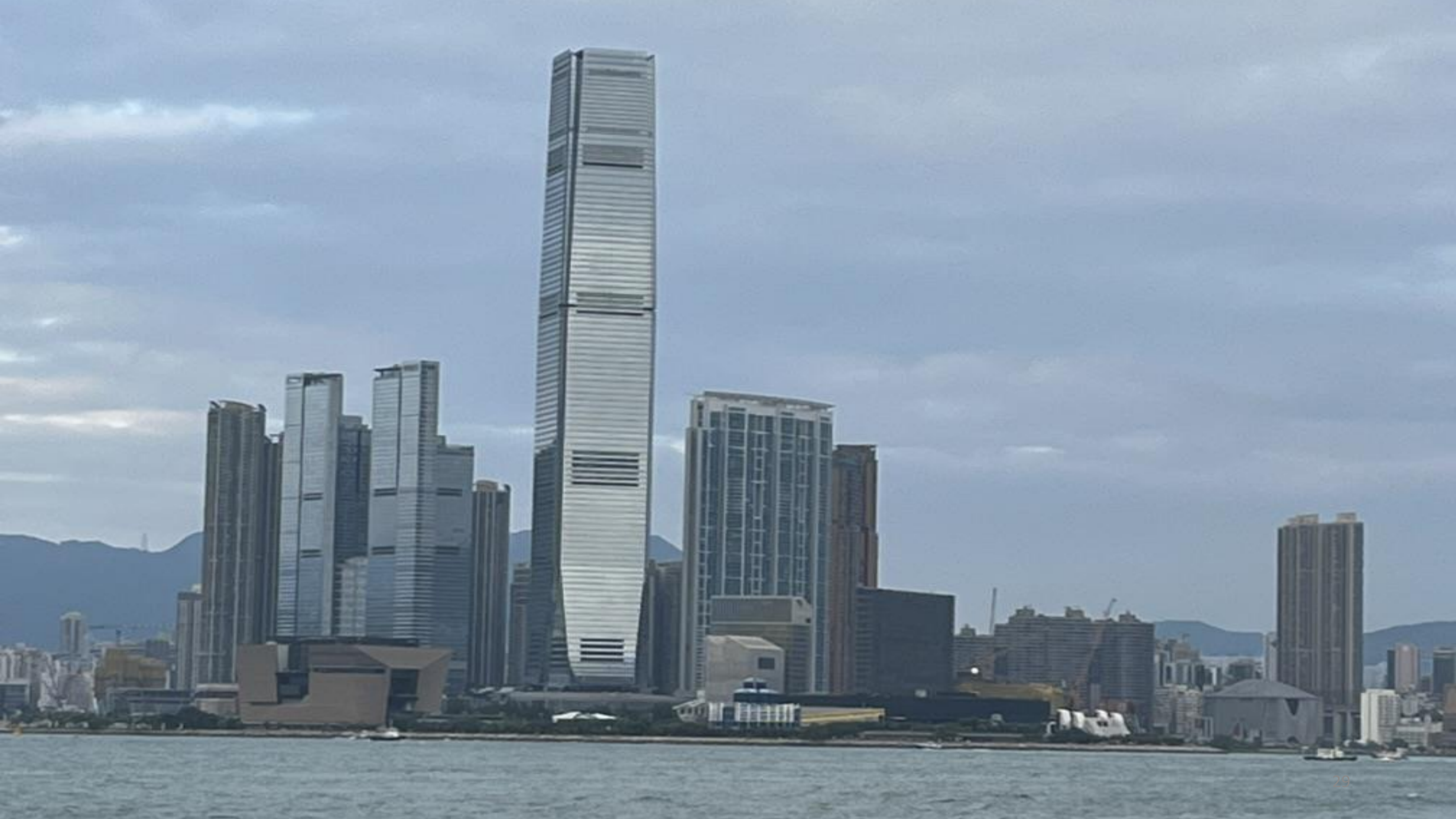
6. Case Study: A. Hong Kong

- Population: 7.5 million people (2024)
- Land Area: 1,106 square kilometers.
- GDP: \$363 billion USD.
- GDP per capita: \$48,000 USD.
- Key Industries: Hong Kong's key industries include finance, trade, tourism, logistics, and professional services.
- Transport: Well-developed transport system that includes buses, trams, ferries, and the [Mass Transit Railway \(MTR\) system](#), highly efficient and densely-used metro systems in the world ([carries 90% of all passengers](#)). HK International Airport is a major transportation hub in the region.

Kona

Hong







Cross-boundary key infrastructure

- Hong Kong and the Mainland are closely connected. With well-developed cross-boundary transportation networks and cross-boundary facilities, there are frequent contacts between the two places and cross-boundary passenger traffic has been on the rise in recent years. In 2019, over 236 million passenger trips crossed the border via land crossings, which include Lo Wu, Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, Hung Hom, Shenzhen Bay Port, Lok Ma Chau (Huanggang), Sha Tau Kok, Man Kam To, West Kowloon Station and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Hong Kong Port, with a daily average of over 640 000 passenger trips.
- The Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) connects with the national high-speed rail network and greatly shorten the traveling time between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, Guangzhou, and other cities in the PRD. It consolidates Hong Kong's position as a regional transport hub. As of June 2019, the average daily patronage of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL was over 54 000 during weekdays and 56 000 during weekends.

Hong Kong's Connectivity within GBA

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB)



Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB)

- . Opened in October 2018
- . Spans from Hong Kong port to Zhuhai and Macao with a total length of 41.6 km. Together with the 13.4 km-long Zhuhai Link Road, the total length is 55 km. It is the longest bridge-cum-tunnel sea-crossing in the world
- . Reduces the travelling time between the Kwai Tsing Container Terminals and Zhuhai from currently 3.5 hours or so to about 75 minutes
- . Reduces the travelling time between the Hong Kong International Airport and Zhuhai from currently 4 hours or so to about 45 minutes
- . Incorporates the western side of the Pearl River Delta into a reachable three-hour commuting radius of Hong Kong

Hong Kong's Connectivity within GBA

Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL)





Hong Kong Section of the Express Rail Link

Hong Kong Section of the Express Rail Link

- . Opened in September 2018
- . Connects with the over 30 000-km National High Speed Rail Network
- . Direct train service to 58 Mainland destinations
- . Shortest traveling time for trains departing from the West Kowloon Station:
 - about 14 minutes to Futian
 - about 18 minutes to Shenzhen North
 - about 46 minutes to Guangzhou South

Hong Kong's Four Main Industries (2021)

	GDP Share	Employment Share
• Trading and Logistics	23.7 %	16.5 %
• Financial services	21.3 %	7.6 %
• Professional services and other producer services	11.4 %	15.5 %
• Tourism *	0.1 %	0.6 %
Total	56.5 %	40.2 %
*Tourism in 2018 : 4.5 % (GDP) and 6.6 % (Employment share)		

Hong Kong's Key Strengths

- Unique advantages of “One country, Two systems”
- Free flow of capital and information
- Rule of law
- Safe and low crime rate
- Clean government
- Independent legal and judicial system
- Robust Intellectual property protection regime
- Friendly and easy business environment
- Low and simple tax regime
- Diverse and international talent pool
- Good transport and communication infrastructure

World's Top Financial Centres 2024

- 1. New York City** - Home to Wall Street and major financial institutions
- 2. London** - Historic financial hub with banking, insurance, and foreign exchange.
- 3. Hong Kong** - Financial centre in Asia, known stock market and a gateway to China.
- 4. Singapore** - Financial hub in Southeast Asia for banking and wealth management.
- 5. Tokyo** - Major financial center with banking and investment.
- 6. Shanghai** - An emerging financial centre in banking and investment.
- 7. Frankfurt** – EU's Financial capital, home to Central Bank and financial institutions.
- 8. Dubai** - Financial hub in Middle East for its banking and investment sectors.

Rankings criteria: economic performance, infrastructure, and regulatory environment.

Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI).

World's Freest Economies 2024

Fraser Institute, Canada

Ranking	Economies	Score (10)
1	Hong Kong	8.58
2	Singapore	8.55
3	Switzerland	8.53
4	New Zealand	8.39
5	USA	8.09
6	Ireland.	8.02
6	Denmark	8.02
8	Canada	7.99
9	Australia	7.98
9	Luxembourg	7.98
10	Japan	7.90

The Roles of Hong Kong in the GBA

- Basic Research
- Applied Research
- Prototype development
- Testing and certification
- Marketing and other professional support
(eg intellectual property protection etc.)
- Mass production and manufacturing
- Fund raising in capital market
- A bridge connecting GBA, Mainland China & the world

The Roles of Hong Kong

1. “Outline Development Plan for the GBA” stipulates that the major functions of Hong Kong are to consolidate and strengthen its status as the international financial, shipping and trade centre.
2. Strengthen its status as an offshore renminbi business hub, international asset management centre and risk management centre.
3. Develop finance, trade and commerce, logistics and professional services towards the high-end and high value-added direction.

The Roles of Hong Kong

4. Forcefully promote innovation, science and technology.
5. Cultivate emerging industries; build up Hong Kong as the centre of international legal and arbitration services; and construct a competitive international metropolis.”
6. Hong Kong, one of the four core cities in the GBA with Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Macao, with comparative advantages such as well-established institutions, sound legal system, abundant talents, free information circulation, advanced financial and service systems and extensive international contacts, should perform pivotal, coordination and central functions in the GBA

The Roles of Hong Kong

7. Being an integral part of the GBA, Hong Kong is expected and supported by the Central Government to develop into a hub of the Area, and leveraging on Hong Kong's status as an international metropolis, to connect the Area with the world.

8. GBA will enable Hong Kong to integrate fully into the country's development. Leveraging on its advantages of "One Country, Two Systems", Hong Kong can contribute to the country and pave way for the GBA to further link up with the world.

Smart City Development

Six Areas

-  Smart Mobility
-  Smart Living
-  Smart Environment
-  Smart People
-  Smart Government
-  Smart Economy

✓ **First city's Blueprint launched in December 2017**

✓ **Blueprint 2.0 launched in December 2020**

✓ **130+ initiatives**

Hong Kong
Smart City
Blueprint



Hong Kong's Northern Metropolis Development Strategy Highlights



Northern Metropolis Development Strategy

Report
6 October 2021

The Making of the Northern Metropolis /

Formulated on the basis of the Hong Kong 2030+ : Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030 (the Hong Kong 2030+) and with reference made to our country's policy support for Hong Kong (HK) as underlined in the National 14th Five-Year Plan and the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, it is proposed to expand and consolidate the Northern Economic Belt under the Hong Kong 2030+ to become the Northern Metropolis with a total area of 30 000 hectares.

The Northern Metropolis will be good for people to live in, work and travel. With innovation and technology (I&T) industry as the economic engine, the Northern Metropolis together with the Harbour Metropolis will propel HK's development side by side, complementing



each other. The development of the Northern Metropolis will also enhance the co-operation between HK and Shenzhen (SZ) and facilitate our integration into the overall development of our country.

Northern Metropolis Development Strategy

- Evolved from “Two Bays, One River” to “Twin Cities, Three Circles”
- Projects should position its coordinate and role in this HK/SZ strategic spatial framework
- Created a spatial and operational framework that necessitates and facilitates HK/SZ integration

Improve Mechanisms for HK/SZ Integration

- Topography of HK-SZ boundary is characterised with the landscape of “Two Bays, One River” (SZ Bay, Mirs Bay, SZ River)
- BCPs and transport infrastructure along the boundary between HK and SZ have enabled the two cities to be connected across the “Two Bays, One River” and go beyond the SZ-HK Economic Belt on both sides and extend inwards into the hinterlands, forming the spatial concept of “Twin Cities, Three Circles”

- “Twin Cities, Three Circles” can facilitate HK to set clear directions for close collaboration with SZ in various areas such as economy, infrastructure, people’s livelihood and ecological spaces are integrated, including joint pursuits of creating a promising community where industrial and ecological spaces are integrated



7. Case Study: B. Shenzhen

- **Population**: The current population of Shenzhen is estimated to be around **17.5 million** people (2024).
- **Land area**: 2,050 Sq.Km.
- **GDP**: Shenzhen's GDP reached approximately **US\$364 billion** in 2020, making it one of the wealthiest cities in China.
- **Per Capita GDP**: With a population of 17.5 million and a GDP of \$364 billion, the per capita GDP of Shenzhen can be calculated as approximately **US\$20,800**.

Shenzhen

Population and Economy

- Shenzhen has experienced rapid population growth due to its status as a leading tech hub.
- The city's economy has thrived, driven by industries such as technology, finance, logistics, and manufacturing.

GDP and Key Industries

- Shenzhen boasts a substantial GDP, positioning it as one of China's wealthiest cities.
- Key industries in Shenzhen include information technology, biotechnology, financial services, and advanced manufacturing.

Shenzhen

High-Tech Industries and Big Companies

- Shenzhen is known as China's Silicon Valley, home to numerous high-tech companies and start-ups.
- Big companies like Huawei, Tencent, DJI, and BYD have their headquarters or significant operations in Shenzhen.

Green Transportation

- Shenzhen has invested heavily in green transportation initiatives, such as electric buses and charging infrastructure.
- The city operates the world's largest fleet of electric buses, contributing to reduced carbon emissions and improved air quality.

Talent Employment

- Shenzhen attracts top talent from around the world due to its thriving tech industry.
- The city offers abundant employment opportunities in technology, finance, research and development sectors.

Shenzhen as a Low Carbon City

- Integrate economic growth with environmental sustainability.
- Effective strategic approach to achieve innovation and sustainability goals.
- Apply low carbon urban planning and construction, renewable energy utilization, and green transportation systems.
- Integrate comprehensive planning, policy

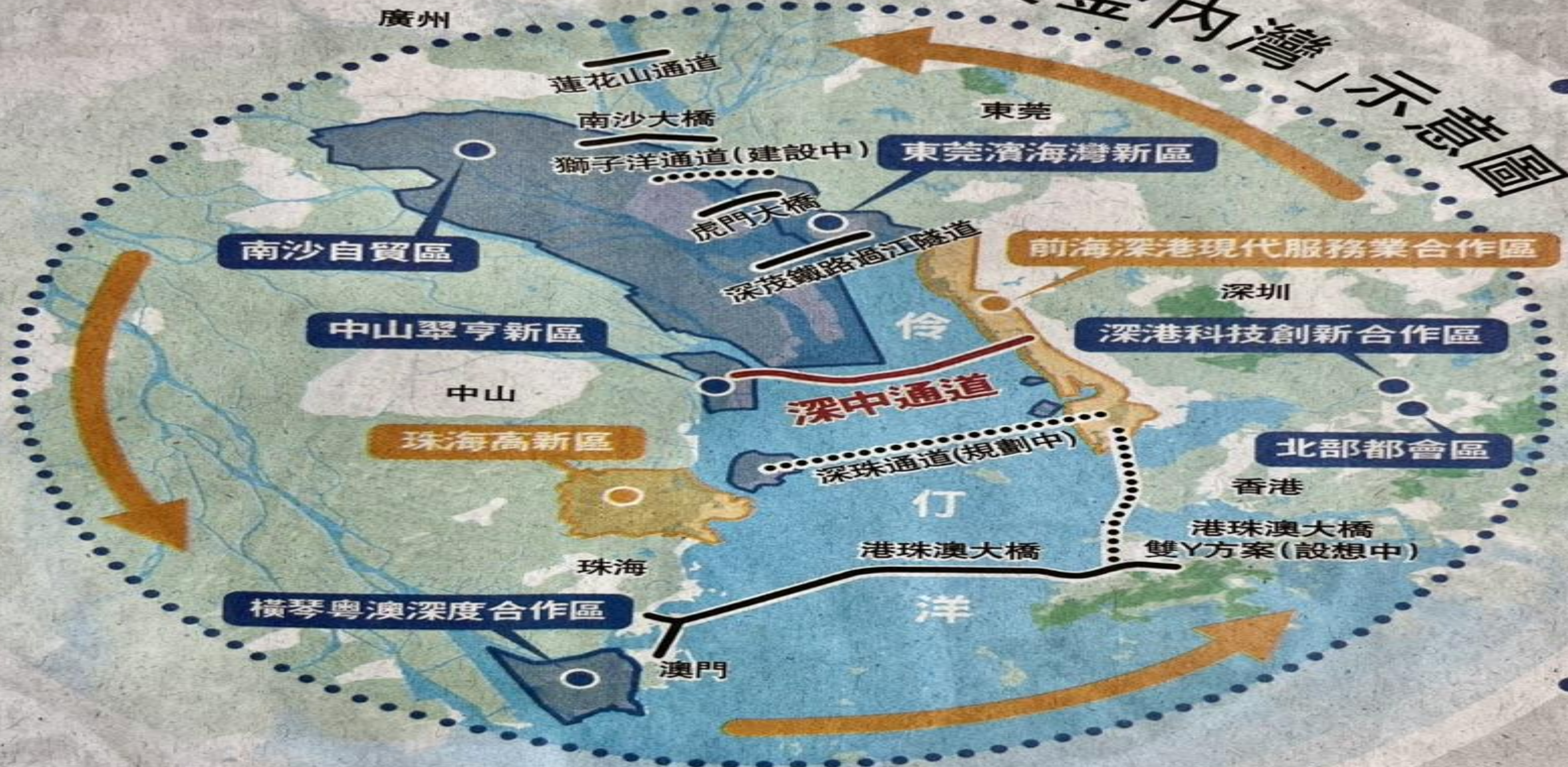
Shenzhen as a Low Carbon City

- Successfully reduced carbon emissions and energy consumption while fostering economic development.
- Making it a benchmark for sustainable urban development in China and globally.
- Supported by public policies and incentives to adopt electric vehicles (EVs) and the necessary charging infrastructure.
- Shenzhen is a leader in electric mobility, showcasing GBA's commitment to innovative solutions for

Shenzhen-Zhongshan Bridge

- . Commenced operation in June 2024
- . 24 km long; consisting of a cluster of infrastructure, including a sea-crossing bridge, a subsea tunnel, artificial islands and an underground interchange.
- . Connects Shenzhen, Zhongshan, and Nansha District of Guangzhou.
- . Four lanes in each direction with a speed of 100 km/h.
- . The only direct expressway connecting Shenzhen, Dongguan and Huizhou with Zhuhai, Zhongshan and Jiangmen.
- . Reduces the travelling time between Shenzhen and Zhongshan from 2 hours to 20 minutes.

100公里「黃金內灣」地圖



BOLSTERING THE HISTORIC CASE

Call for more studies to back Beijing's South China Sea claims

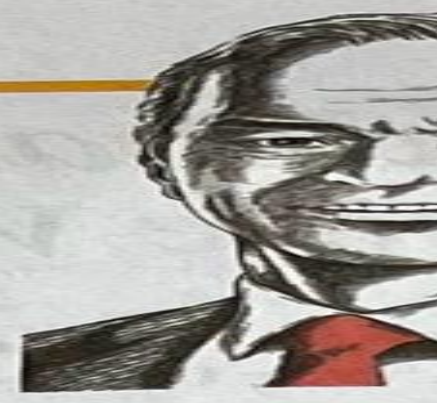
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WOMAN HELD OVER HUSBAND'S KILLING

Police say 32-year-old was suffering from severe depression since her son's birth

> PAGE A4



TRANSPORT



The eight-lane highway is jammed full as travellers turn out in massive numbers to sample an experience that was seven years in the making. Photos: Eugene Lee, Yik Yeung-man

XI WELCOMES BAY AREA LINK AND URGES MORE INTEGRATION

Huge congestion on opening day as vehicles pack new highway connecting Shenzhen and Zhongshan

Oscar Liu and Phoebe Zhang

A massive road project connecting the two sides of the Pearl River Delta opened yesterday with heavy traffic congestion, as President Xi Jinping hailed the launch and called for further strides to promote integration in the Greater Bay Area.

The 24km Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link, which took seven years to construct, will cut travel time between the two cities on opposite sides of the delta from two hours to 30 minutes. But heavy vehicle pressure resulted in long traffic jams at both entrances to the link – which includes two bridges and two artificial islands, as well as an undersea tunnel – on the first day of operation.

Kilometres-long queues formed as many vehicles crossed provinces to experience the 44.69 billion yuan (HK\$48 billion) eight-lane highway for the first time.

Xi, in a congratulatory note released hours before the link opened at 3pm, said the crossing was another record-breaking engineering project in the same vein as the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge.

"This proves that Chinese-style modernisation is achieved through hard work," he added.

Xi stressed the link needed to run smoothly and intelligently to "play a pioneering role in transport and promote the integrated development of the east and west sides of the Pearl River Delta".

He called for more integration in the bay area, so it could become an example of high-quality development and a leading light in Chinese-style modernisation.

The bay area is Beijing's plan to link Hong Kong, Macau and nine mainland cities to create an economic powerhouse.

Excited Hongkongers queued up at a station in Kwun Tong at 2pm to board 13 cross-border buses lined up to make the maiden trip.

A tour bus, with a Post reporter on board, crossed the Shenzhen Bay port at 3.20pm, but only made it to Zhongshan at 8pm because of a major jam on the Guangshen Coastal Expressway, a key route connected to the project.

A check on Chinese navigation system Baidu Map at 5pm showed the congestion along the 100km/h expressway had slowed the estimated traffic speed on the Shenzhen side to 12km/h.

Private vehicles with Shenzhen licence plates took up the lion's share on the link, while some others were from neighbouring provinces and cross-border coaches.

The link will also cut journey

times between Hong Kong and Zhongshan from 2½ hours to 1½ hours as coaches will no longer need to use Nansha Bridge, north of the older Humen Bridge, to reach destinations on the western side of the delta.

It took six hours yesterday for the tour bus to get to the destination. Among the tour bus members was finance industry worker Jennifer Mok, 40. She said she was excited by the prospect of a two-day trip with her husband, but the traffic jam caught her off guard.

"I expect the new bridge may be a bit busy because it is a new thing," she added. "But the bus was stuck on the highway for almost two hours. It's not acceptable – and we are not even at the entrance of the link."

Yeung Wai-lung, 62, a construction engineer, said he planned to spend the long weekend across the border with his wife and four other relatives.

He was not too bothered by the traffic snarl-up.

"Unexpected things happen when travelling ... it's OK as it's the first day of the road operation," he said. "I can see ourselves travelling to Zhongshan or even more nearby cities with the link."

A round-trip bus ticket, offered by the Internal East Tour agency, cost HK\$149 between Hong Kong and Zhongshan.

The link is designed to have a daily traffic volume of more than 100,000 vehicles.

Truck drivers who routinely travel between Zhongshan and Shenzhen told state broadcaster CCTV that they looked forward to a shorter time on the road and less cost.

One driver, Cao Lixian, said in the past he had a bed made up in the back of his truck.

He delivers cargo between Zhongshan and Yantian port in Shenzhen for his employers, who work in the export business.

"In the past, one round trip could take me at least seven hours," he told CCTV.

"I had little time to spend with my family."

Lawmaker Ben Chan Hanpan, chairman of the Legislative Council's transport panel, expressed concern that congestion at the Zhuhai port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge would worsen if more vehicles used the crossing under the "Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles" scheme.

He suggested improvements be made to the road infrastructure at the Zhuhai port or authorities consider allowing vehicles travelling back to Hong Kong to use the Shenzhen Bay checkpoint to ease the burden of the southbound lanes of the bridge.

Additional reporting by Danny Mok



Drivers and passengers take photos while stuck in traffic on the bridge.



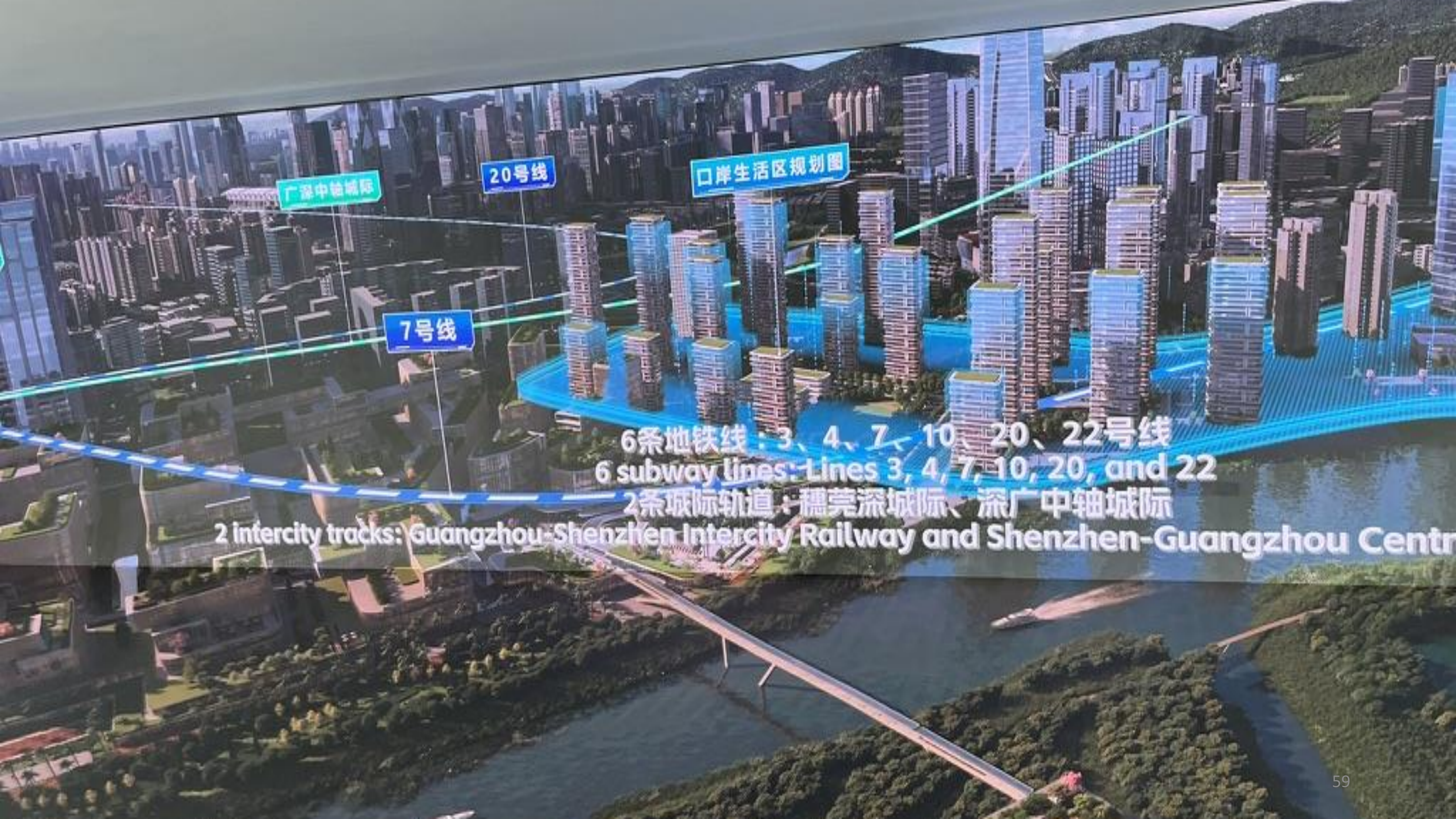
Shenzhen



An aerial perspective of a futuristic urban landscape. A wide river flows through the center, flanked by dense clusters of modern skyscrapers and green spaces. In the foreground, a large area of wetlands or agricultural fields is visible, characterized by a patchwork of blue and green rectangular plots. A multi-lane highway or bridge structure curves through the lower right portion of the image. The background shows rolling hills under a clear blue sky.

河套深港科技创新合作区

Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Cooperation Zone



广深中轴城际

20号线

口岸生活区规划图

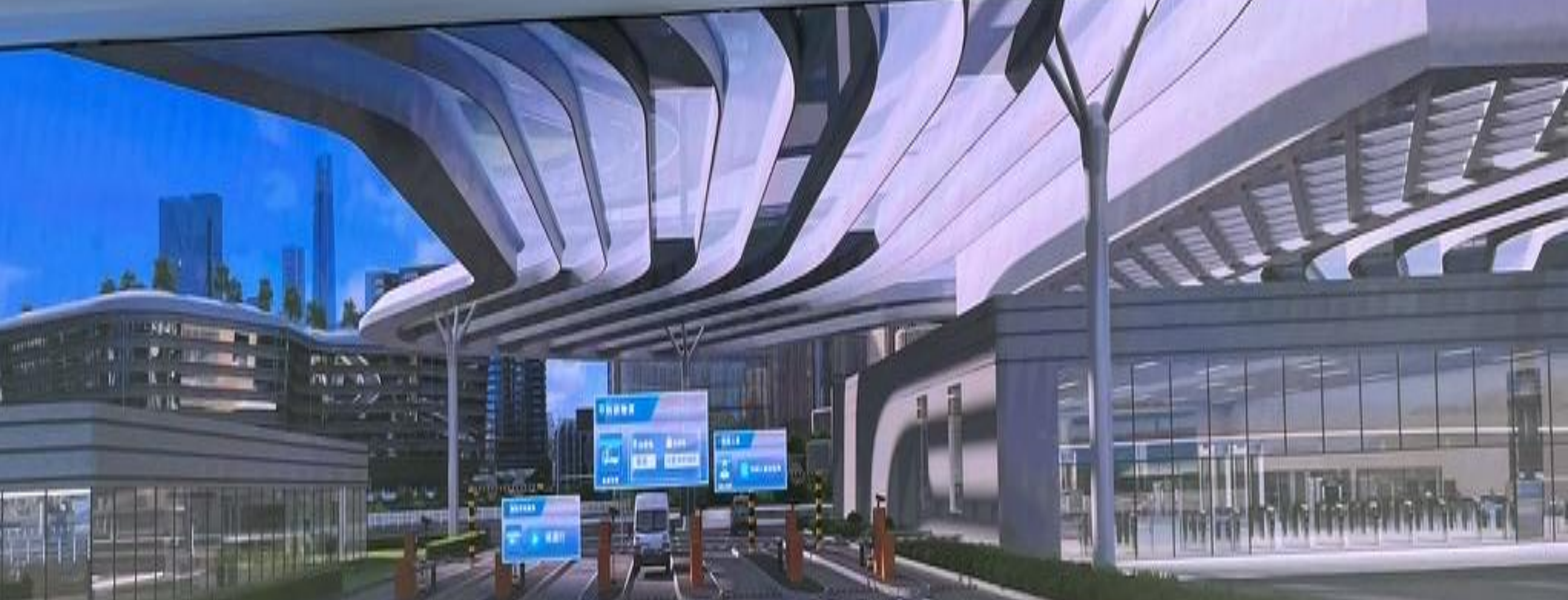
7号线

6条地铁线：3、4、7、10、20、22号线

6 subway lines: Lines 3, 4, 7, 10, 20, and 22

2条城际轨道：穗莞深城际、深广中轴城际

2 intercity tracks: Guangzhou-Shenzhen Intercity Railway and Shenzhen-Guangzhou Central Intercity Railway



科研人员：一线高度便利出入境

Researchers: Highly convenient entry and exit at the first line

科研物资：一线放开、二线管住、区内自由

Research materials: First line release, second line management, and freedom within the area



智能化社区管理服务、国际化教育医疗配套
Smart community services, international education and health facilities

8. Summary and Conclusion

Significance of the GBA development

- Significance of GBA as a powerhouse for finance, innovation, and technology.
- Strategic positioning and blend of international and mainland Chinese business environments.
- Aim to lead in cutting-edge research, financial services, and technological advancements.

Study Findings

- Policy support emphasizing R&D investment, cross-border collaboration, and incentives for green tech.
- Success of cross-border collaboration in accelerating innovation pace and attracting global partnerships.
- Impact of investments in green technologies on reducing carbon emissions and enhancing sustainability.
- Alignment of findings with theoretical frameworks emphasizing sustainability, innovation ecosystems, and urban growth.
- Unique strategies and challenges faced by

Conclusion

- GBA's achievements in sustainable innovation and technological advancements.
- Challenges in regulatory harmonization, economic balance, and environmental sustainability.
- Importance of policy coherence, collaboration, and continuous innovation for sustainable development.
- Recommendations for policymakers and practitioners on regulatory