

Foshan Finds a Central Role

From world-class sports to high-tech ceramics, this GBA city shows how it is advancing in the manufacturing and leisure sectors

Since the Express Rail Link came into operation in September last year, Foshan in Guangdong province is now a manageable 90-minute journey from Hong Kong. Previously, it would have taken several hours to travel to this city in the Greater Bay Area (GBA), located to the southeast of Guangzhou.

A Chamber delegation took advantage of the new high-speed line to visit the city on January 17-18, traveling via Guangzhou South Railway Station.

The mission was led by China Committee Chairman Petrina Tam and Young Executives Club (YEC) Chairman Eric Fok, accompanied by the Chamber's LegCo Representative Jeffrey Lam.

Located in the hinterland of the Pearl River, the city forms part of the Guangzhou-Foshan Metropolis Circle. Foshan is now emerging from the shadow of its better-known neighbour, and is making its mark as a rapidly developing city and a key part of the GBA initiative.

According to the 2017 Report on China's Urban Competitiveness from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Foshan ranked third in Guangdong province in terms of urban competitiveness, after Guangzhou and Shenzhen. In the whole of the Mainland, Foshan ranked 11th. The growth potential of the city cannot be overlooked.

First stop on the delegation's schedule was the GBA International Sports and Cultural Centre. This major arena opened in November and acts as an excellent showcase for the plan to develop the leisure industry across the GBA.

The arena is an NBA-level (the U.S.-based National Basketball Association) sports and cultural centre, and

was built by the privately-owned enterprise Nenking Group. Covering an area of 38,900 square metres, it has 15,000 seats and will host entertainment performances, e-sports tournaments and exhibitions as well as basketball and other sporting events.

The arena is one of the host venues for the 2019 FIBA Basketball World Cup, which will take place in China for the first time this year.

Alex Shum, General Manager of Swiss Fortune, the operator of the arena, explained some of its key attractions. It is not only situated in the heart of Foshan's business district, but is also geographically at the centre of the whole GBA, and is easily accessible by public transport from across the region.

The transportation upgrades across the GBA to create a "quality living circle" also benefit venues like Foshan's arena, as they greatly increase the potential audience for major sporting and cultural events. The arena also has shopping malls and other attractions for visitors to enjoy.

"We can provide one-stop services for business and entertainment events, which also helps foster the development of surrounding areas," Shum said.

In the afternoon, delegates visited Xin Zhong Yuan Ceramics. The company was established in 1984 and its products have been used in landmark projects around the world including Burj Khalifa in Dubai, the Porsche Design Tower in Miami and Tiananmen Gate in Beijing.

Guo Hao, Brand Director at Xin Zhong Yuan Ceramics, said the company hopes to leverage its success to help promote Chinese design and expertise around



GBA International Sports and Cultural Arena
國際體育文化演藝中心



Mission leader Petrina Tam with Zhu Wei,
Mayor of Foshan
團長譚唐毓麗及佛山市市長朱偉



Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Technology Exhibition and Exchange Center
粵港澳科技展示交流中心

the world. For example, it has cooperated with the celebrated designer Steve Leung to create a series of ceramics – Xuan – inspired by traditional Chinese rice paper.

“We were all very impressed at the high level of technology we saw in the ceramics factory, and the innovative products that they are creating,” Tam said.

Xin Zhong Yuan Ceramics is also supporting professionals in the sector while promoting its brand. It organizes the Chinese Design Elites event, and established the Design Business School to provide a stage for young designers to shine.

“These two visits showed that Foshan is a vibrant and innovative city,” Tam said. “We also saw that Foshan is a hub of private enterprises, which creates lots of cooperation opportunities for Hong Kong businesses in the future.”

Zhu Wei, Mayor of Foshan Municipal Government, hosted a dinner to welcome the Chamber delegation.

“Foshan is taking forward the development of the GBA, especially in seizing opportunities to further enhance cooperation between Hong Kong and Foshan,” Zhu said.

“Hong Kong enjoys advantages in the high-end services industry while Foshan is strong in manufacturing. If the two cities work together, their complementary advantages will help propel the manufacturing sector in Foshan up the value chain.”

During the dinner, members exchanged views with Foshan officials on practical ways to develop this cooperation. The dinner was followed by a visit to Foshan Lingnan World, an older area of the city that has been

rejuvenated as a cultural, shopping and dining district, to give members the opportunity to experience the more relaxed side of Foshan.

The following day, members had lunch with Huang Zhihao, Standing Committee Member of Foshan Municipal Party and Party Secretary of Nanhai District Committee. Huang said Foshan had long been famous for its manufacturing industry. But as the GBA moves away from heavy industry, he said he hopes that Foshan can cooperate with Hong Kong’s service industries and develop into a forest where private enterprises and start-ups can flourish.

Lam, the Chamber’s LegCo representative, agreed that there was plenty of potential for the two cities to cooperate. “Foshan and Hong Kong can work hand-in-hand in professional and technological areas,” he said. “Hong Kong businesses should capitalize the opportunities now, so that we will not miss the boat.”

During the two-day trip, members also visited Foshan High-tech Industrial Development Zone, FAW-Volkswagen Automotive Co Ltd, HKUST LED-FPD Technology R&D Center at Foshan, Nanhai Sanshan New City, and Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Technology Exhibition and Exchange Centre.

YEC Chairman Fok said that the visit had been interesting from the point of view of younger professionals.

“With YEC as the platform, I hope we can strengthen exchanges between the two cities,” he said. “We can encourage more young people in Hong Kong to reach out to the GBA and consider starting their own businesses in places like Foshan.” ❀



Foshan's leaders with HKGCC delegates
考察團與佛山市領導合照

佛山專屬中心角色

從世界級體育到高科技陶瓷，這個大灣區城市展示出其製造和休閒產業的發展

自廣深港高鐵去年9月正式通車，廣東省佛山如今距離香港僅90分鐘的車程。過往，要前往這個位於廣州東南部的大灣區城市，需要數小時才能抵達。

總商會中國委員會主席譚唐毓麗及卓青社主席霍啟山，在總商會立法會代表林健鋒陪同下，於1月17至18日率領考察團，乘坐高鐵經廣州南站，前往佛山考察。

佛山地處珠江三角洲腹地，是「廣佛都市圈」的一部分。佛山正嶄露頭角，成為迅速發展的城市，也是大灣區倡議的重要組成部分。

根據中國社會科學院2017年發布的《中國城市競爭力報告》，佛山在廣東省城市競爭力方面位列第三，僅次於廣州和深圳，在全國則位居第11，發展潛力不容忽視。

考察團第一站來到國際體育文化演藝中心。演藝中心於11月開幕，正好體現大灣區倡議下休閒產業的發展。

該中心由民營企業能興建設，為NBA級別（美國國家籃球協會）的體育文化演藝中心。場館佔地38,900平方米，規劃配置15,000個觀眾席，可舉辦演藝活動、電競賽事、展覽會，以及籃球和其他體育賽事。

該中心亦是「2019國際籃聯籃球世界盃」的主賽場館之一，而賽事今年將首度於中國舉行。

演藝中心營運商瑞達公司董事總經理岑永雄解釋場館的主要特色。該館不但位於佛山商業區的核心地帶，還坐落整個大灣區的中心，交通四通八達。

為創建大灣區「優質生活圈」而優化的交通基建，亦大大增加了主要體育文化活動的潛在觀眾，令佛山演藝中心一類的場館可從中受惠。演藝中心還設有購物商場和其他景點供遊人享用。

岑永雄說：「我們可提供一站式服務予商業及娛樂活動，同時有助帶動周邊發展。」

考察團於下午前往新中源陶瓷有限公司參觀。新中源陶瓷於1984年成立，產品廣泛應用於全球地標項目，如杜拜塔、邁阿密保時捷設計大廈及北京天安門。

品牌總監郭浩表示，新中源希望憑藉公司的成功經驗，協助向世界各地推廣中國的設計和專門技術。例如，該公司與國際著名設計師梁志天合作，以中國傳統宣紙為靈感，創作出陶瓷系列——「絢」。

譚唐毓麗說：「我們在陶瓷工廠看到高水平的技術和他們創作的創新產品，印象非常深刻。」

新中源在推廣其品牌之餘，亦支持行內專業人才的發展。該公司舉辦「中國設計星」活動，並成立星學院，為年輕設計師提供展現個人才華的舞台。

譚唐毓麗說：「從這兩個參觀活動可見，佛山是充滿活力的創新城市。我們還看到佛山是民營企業的樞紐，未來為可香港企業創造很多合作機會。」

佛山市市長朱偉設晚宴歡迎考察團一行。

朱市長說：「佛山正全力推進粵港澳大灣區建設，特別是搶抓國家戰略機遇，進一步加強香港與佛山的合作。」

他續說：「香港擁有高端服務業優勢，而佛山則有製造業優勢。若兩地『拼船出海』，攜手合作，互補優勢，將有助推動佛山製造業向價值鏈上游發展。」

晚宴期間，會員與佛山官員就發展合作的實際方案交換意見。其後，團員遊覽嶺南天地，讓會員感受佛山悠閒的一面。該處為市內舊區，現已重新發展為文化、購物和餐飲區。



Huang Zhihao, Standing Committee Member of Foshan Municipal Party and Party Secretary of Nanhai District Committee
佛山市委常委、南海區委書記黃志豪



Designer Steve Leung's creations at Xin Zhong Yuan Ceramics
新中源陶瓷與設計師梁志天合作推出的陶瓷系列

翌日，會員與佛山市委常委、南海區委書記黃志豪午餐。黃書記表示，佛山以製造業聞名於世，但隨著大灣區遠離重工業，他希望佛山能與香港的服務業合作，使當地發展成為民營及初創培育森林。

總商會立法會代表林健鋒認同兩市有很大的合作潛力。他說：「佛山與香港可從專業和科技方面合作。港企應好好把握機遇，以免『蘇州過後無艇搭』。」

在兩天的行程中，考察團還參觀了佛山國家高新技術產業開發區、一汽-大眾汽車有限公司、佛山市香港科技大學LED-FPD工程技術研究開發中心、南海三山新城及粵港澳科技展示交流中心。

卓青社主席霍啟山表示，從年輕專業人士的角度來看，此行饒富趣味。

他說：「卓青社作為一個青年平台，希望大家能透過考察建立關係，加強兩地交流，推動更多香港青年到佛山等地創業發展，走進大灣區。」



HKUST LED-FPD Technology R&D Center at Foshan
佛山市香港科技大學LED-FPD工程技術研究開發中心