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THINK **HONG KONG**



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2025

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About the HKTDC

Over the course of some six decades, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) has been facilitating growth and collaboration opportunities for businesses.

Amid global challenges, the HKTDC remains committed to helping businesses navigate the changing trade landscape and transform, while reinforcing Hong Kong's status as an international finance, business and investment hub as well as its dual role as superconnector and super value-adder.

This booklet presents a collection of success stories highlighting the

comprehensive support we provide businesses, large and small, via our anchor fairs and conferences, support programmes and promotions around the globe – all to help them realise their growth and expansion plans via the dynamic Hong Kong platform.

Our work covers a wide range of traditional industries and today's key growth sectors, including innovation, sustainability and wellness, to enable businesses to upgrade and transform in order to be competitive and future-ready. The stories herein reflect the diverse assistance we can offer across sectors.

As the gateway to the ever-growing Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and vast Chinese Mainland market, Asia's World City links China with the world. Coupled with its fundamental strengths and advantages, Hong Kong is the go-to platform for businesses keen to expand across Asia or go global.

The HKTDC is a statutory body established in 1966 to promote, assist and develop Hong Kong's trade. With 51 offices globally, including 13 in the Chinese Mainland, the HKTDC promotes Hong Kong as a two-way international business and investment hub.

We organise international exhibitions and conferences as well as business missions to create opportunities year-round for businesses, particularly SMEs, in the mainland and overseas markets via Hong Kong.

In addition, the HKTDC provides a variety of SME and start-up support services as well as the latest market insights and product information via research reports and digital news channels to help businesses capture opportunities worldwide.



Photo: AstraZeneca

Accelerating drug discovery, advancing global health

AstraZeneca anchors global R&D in Hong Kong's biomedical hub.

Hong Kong's thriving ecosystem for medical innovation has proved to be the right choice for AstraZeneca to establish a global research base in the city, according to Shan Wu, the company's General Manager for Hong Kong and Macao.

Further complemented by connections to local innovators facilitated by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), and the firm's drug discoveries are potentially set to improve the lives of millions across the globe.

The UK pharma giant established its local operations in 1990, and over the past 35 years has introduced more than 100 products in Hong Kong and Macao.

Along the way, it has become a strategic partner of the Hong Kong SAR Government's Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises and Hong Kong Science & Technology Parks Corporation.

AstraZeneca took a major step forward in 2023, when it opened its Global R&D China Hong Kong Centre focusing on drug development in cutting-edge fields, such as cell and gene therapy.

As the first research base established by a top 10 global pharmaceutical company in Hong Kong, the Centre promotes the integration of clinical research between Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland and global markets and enables Hong Kong patients to benefit from innovative treatments earlier.

“Hong Kong’s medical and educational institutions... enable the promotion of consistent and high-quality healthcare services and elevate the city’s reputation as a global benchmark.”

Shan Wu

General Manager for Hong Kong and Macao
AstraZeneca

AstraZeneca’s success in Hong Kong is closely tied to the city’s world class medical training and management, which align with international standards, according to Ms Wu.

“Hong Kong’s medical and educational institutions have earned international accreditations and boast world-class professionals and thought leaders, enabling the promotion of consistent and high-quality healthcare services and elevating the city’s reputation as a global benchmark.”

Ms Wu further notes the city’s efficient clinical trial platform, which aligns with global standards and is accepted by regulatory agencies, such as China’s National Medical Products Administration, the European Medicines Agency and US Food and Drug Administration, reducing the need for duplicate trials and accelerating drug registration.

Leveraging Asia’s medical innovation hub

To position the city as a global health and medical innovation hub, the Hong Kong SAR Government has been rolling out a series of initiatives.

Key measures include adopting a fast-track drug approval mechanism,

opening medical databases to enhance research efficiency and launching the Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Institute to support medical research institutions conducting clinical trials.

Echoing this momentum, AstraZeneca has boosted its engagement through a series of high-profile initiatives supported by the HKTDC.

In 2024, the Council introduced the pharma innovator to the Centre for Translational Stem Cell Biology, a research group exploring applications for stem cells in medicine led by experts from The University of Hong Kong.

Discussions facilitated by the HKTDC culminated in the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the two parties to advance clinical applications of stem cell innovations.

The signing ceremony took place at the **Asia Summit on Global Health** in 2024 – organised by the HKTDC – which celebrated its 5th edition in 2025.

AstraZeneca has also been participating in other HKTDC flagship events, including the **Hong Kong International Medical and Healthcare Fair**, to make new connections.

Among other initiatives, the firm formalised a strategic partnership with the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park, located on the Hong Kong-Shenzhen border, which aims to further strengthen the region’s healthcare development.

Looking ahead, the pharma giant has a global target to deliver 20 new medicines by 2030, with Hong Kong, Macao and the Chinese Mainland set to be one of the priority beneficiaries.

And with its R&D centre now operational, the potential for AstraZeneca’s local discoveries to reach international patients is immense.

“Just as Hong Kong acts as a superconnector, our goal is to facilitate local and mainland innovations to go global,” affirmed Ms Wu.

“We are firmly committed to delivering new medicines that truly impact patients’ lives in Hong Kong and beyond.”

Since the centre’s launch, the firm has tripled its research pipeline and is now supervising 46 clinical trials, involving over 130 investigators with more than 400 patients enrolled.

Design without borders, crafting global futures

Maison&Objet pivots to Asia through HKTDC's partnership.

The rising prominence of Chinese design on the world stage, driven by elevated standards in quality, craftsmanship and innovation, has captured the attention of the global design community.

For Paris-based design organisation Maison&Objet, this dramatic evolution spurred the launch of its first design showcase in Hong Kong and marked a strategic shift for the entity, according to Executive Board President Philippe Delhomme.

Now, through a partnership with the HKTDC, the organisation aims to become a leading hub connecting regional professionals with global opportunities and is set to expand its influence in Asia's fast-evolving design markets via Hong Kong.

A leader in the international décor, design and lifestyle community, Maison&Objet brings together key players from the home décor and furniture industries through major trade shows, including Paris Design Week each September.

The organisation first connected with the HKTDC in September 2023 at the *Think Business, Think Hong Kong* promotion in Paris.

Attended by over 1,000 business leaders, the event featured a symposium on business opportunities, an exhibition of Hong Kong innovations and business matching meetings.

A showcase of Hong Kong-designed products and art pieces caught the eye of Mr Delhomme and his team, prompting immediate discussions with the HKTDC on collaboration.



“The HKTDC understands not just trade, but also the cultural dynamics of design. This made our collaboration richer and more impactful.”

Philippe Delhomme

Executive Board President
Maison&Objet

contribute to the growth of the design sector in the region.

“Hong Kong is a unique place, at once cosmopolitan, strategic and deeply connected to both East and West,” said Mr Delhomme. “It offers a mature, design-savvy ecosystem with a strong presence of interior designers, retailers and influential specifiers.”

He further highlighted that the coordinated effort between the Hong Kong SAR Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency and HKTDC reflected a methodical push to position the city as a leading design hub. The Financial Secretary Paul Chan also gave strong support to developing the partnership.

With ambitious objectives in place, the partners’ focus turned to implementation, culminating in the Maison&Objet Design Factory showcase at the HKTDC’s [DesignInspire](#) 2024.

Covering 1,000 sqm in exhibition space, the organisation presented cutting-edge approaches to conscious design – a holistic design philosophy prioritising the environment – with decorative pieces,

furniture and homeware from more than 120 brands and 21 master artisans.

In addition, the Hong Kong Design on Stage pavilion – originally part of Paris Design Week – was re-created, showcasing eight designers and studios.

The results surpassed expectations, drawing in over 50,000 visits over three days to explore more than 580 pieces on display at the [DesignInspire](#) exhibition.

“We were very proud of the meaningful conversations and feedback we received, with many describing the experience as ‘immersive, beautiful and intellectually stimulating’,” said Mr Delhomme.

“Viewed from a longer term, it has laid the groundwork for a sustainable Maison&Objet presence in Hong Kong and Mainland China.”

The organisation credits the Council for its considered approach to enduring partnerships.

“The HKTDC understands not just trade, but also the cultural dynamics of design.

This made our collaboration richer and more impactful. We see them as long-term allies in our continued expansion in the region.”

Mr Delhomme revealed the upcoming Maison&Objet Design Factory exhibition at [DesignInspire](#) in December will feature an enlarged space, curated showcases by interior designers from Europe and Asia and a business matching space.

The entity will target visitors from the Chinese Mainland and Southeast Asia, reinforcing its commitment to regional growth and cross-cultural exchange.

Looking ahead, the organisation is keen to expand its footprint across Asia and sees Hong Kong – with its advantageous location, openness and entrepreneurial spirit – as a natural partner for business success.

“The Hong Kong initiative is more than an event. It’s part of a long-term ambition to build Maison&Objet into a truly global platform, where regional creative energy meets international reach,” concluded Mr Delhomme.

A presentation of Hong Kong designers at the entity’s fair in Paris in January 2024, followed by a February display at the Galeries Lafayette department store in Paris organised by the HKTDC, injected momentum to the discussions.

In May, Maison&Objet and the HKTDC signed a memorandum of understanding to develop a long-term platform in Hong Kong to foster creative exchange and

Creativity and vision flourish at Hong Kong jewellery shows

The Italian Trade Agency has been helping jewellers grow via Hong Kong for 20+ years.

Italian jewellery is celebrated globally for its craftsmanship, quality and timeless elegance.

Incorporating centuries-old traditions to modern designs, this dynamic industry is a major cultural and economic force worldwide.

As part of its ongoing assistance to this vibrant sector, the Italian Trade Agency (ITA) has been working closely with the [Hong Kong International Jewellery Show](#) for almost a quarter of a century, helping Italian jewellers leverage the Hong Kong platform to bolster their connections and drive sales in Asia and beyond.

The [Jewellery Show](#) – a renowned exhibition complemented by

enlightening seminars, dazzling parades and dynamic networking sessions – has been an annual industry fixture for more than four decades.

In 2013, the exhibition spun off a specialised trade platform for loose stones and raw materials, the [Hong Kong International Diamond, Gem and Pearl Show](#).

The ongoing success of these two fairs, both organised by the HKTDC, are a testament to Hong Kong's enduring appeal as a major international jewellery trading hub.

In 2025, the twin shows attracted over 82,000 buyers from 141 countries and regions, illustrating Hong Kong's international influence and value.



“Sales from this Hong Kong exhibition [the Jewellery Show] contribute more than 20% of our business. This show is really important for business expansion.”

Rosaria Borriello

Director
Borriello Massimo

Increased numbers of buyers from across ASEAN, the Middle East, Europe and North America underscored the shows' international reach.

In 2001, the first year the ITA supported the *Jewellery Show*, the agency featured 20 Italian exhibitors.

The following year, that number rose to 34 exhibitors, increasing again to 39 in 2003, as the agency helped a growing number of Italian jewellers pursue valuable growth and collaboration opportunities via the dynamic Hong Kong platform.

Now, the total number of Italian brands exhibiting at the fair regularly surpasses 100 year after year.

In 2025, the ITA gathered 107 exhibitors at the *Jewellery Show*, the largest showing for a European pavilion.

A further 18 participated in the Italian pavilion at the *Diamond, Gem and Pearl Show*, affirming the longstanding value delivered by the twin shows.

Many of these Italian companies are long-term exhibitors.

Jewellery maker Giovanni Ferraris first displayed its original collections at the annual fair in 2013.

“I appreciate this exhibition because it attracts a diverse group of clients from Asia, including Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand,” remarks Vice President Carrie Lee.

“I consider this show to be one of the best in the world with the HKTDC's clear organisation and layout.”

Another long-time exhibitor, jewellery maker Rosita Gioielli D'Amare, has been participating in the show since 2005.

In recent years, more mainland buyers have been attending, notes the company's owner Sergio Giusti. “Hong Kong is a bridge between the East and West and a city of the whole world, bringing us more opportunities.”

Borriello Massimo first attended the industry staple as an exhibitor in 2006.

“We love the Hong Kong show very much,” remarks company Director Rosaria Borriello. “It's the perfect place to do business and meet customers from everywhere.”

The company's biggest buyers came from the Chinese Mainland, India and the Philippines.

“Sales from this Hong Kong exhibition contribute more than 20% of our business,” Ms Borriello adds. “This show is really important for business expansion.”

ITA – run under the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation – promotes foreign trade and Italy's exports, facilitating growth and expansion opportunities for Italian businesses across sectors.

It does so through an extensive network, with 69 offices in 74 countries.

The agency also collaborates with numerous other HKTDC fairs across diverse sectors, including electronics, houseware, wine and spirits, medical products, greentech and more, enabling Italian businesses to connect with potential buyers and partners from around the world via the Council's platforms.

Hong Kong: Gateway to mainland growth

How global consulting firm Fidinam expanded its business with HKTDC support.

Sometimes even the best advisors need some good advice.

This was precisely the case for Fidinam, a leader in business and finance consulting operating across more than 90 countries.

The firm established its Asia-Pacific headquarters in Hong Kong in 2011 to provide one-stop solutions to companies growing their operations in the region.

Asia-Pacific CEO Alessandro Pedrinoni said: "Hong Kong's status as one of the world's freest and most globally connected economies has made it a magnet for international business. The city has a large pool of legal, accounting and tax professionals with international exposure and experience who can provide quality professional services to our clients."

Another reason for choosing Hong Kong was the desire to expand into markets with high potential, particularly the Chinese Mainland.

"Hong Kong and the mainland are interconnected in terms of policy, finance and culture, which made it easier for us to enter the mainland market."

Making a move in the mainland

When the company set its sights on capturing the booming demand for consulting in the Chinese Mainland, it turned to the HKTDC's extensive network for support.

Leveraging our strategic connections and deep local insights led the company to a series of successful partnerships helping mainland companies go global.

“Hong Kong's platform makes it easier for foreign investors to set up enterprises, develop business and capture the mainland's untapped blue ocean market.”

Alessandro Pedrinoni

Asia-Pacific CEO
Fidinam

Our assistance included providing advisory on market entry, business conditions and client targeting. We connected Fidnam to chambers of commerce, business associations and potential partners and invited them to join our business matching events to increase the company's visibility.

As a result of these efforts, the firm secured a strategic partnership with Kangqiao Legal in China's Jinan Province.

The initial connection was made when senior Fidnam executives spoke at Belt and Road forums in Qingdao in 2017 and Jinan in 2019, follow-up events to our ***Belt and Road Summit*** in Hong Kong in 2017.

The ***HKTDC Qingdao office*** has continued to help Fidnam cultivate new opportunities, organise promotional roadshows and facilitate client visits to grow its mainland business.

Acting on our recommendation, the company set up a branch office in Shanghai in 2021 to meet rising client demand.

Through the ***HKTDC's Hong Kong headquarters*** and ***office in Qingdao*** – a northern China manufacturing base and the world's 7th busiest port – we helped the company accelerate its expansion in the mainland.

Boosting momentum

Under the HKTDC's ***Support Scheme for Pursuing Development in the Mainland***, our ***Qingdao office*** arranged high-level meetings between Fidnam and key government departments and enterprises in Qingdao.

This support proved instrumental in 2024, when the company held a high-profile forum attended by staff from Shanghai, Singapore, Vietnam and Dubai to showcase its overseas expansion consulting services.

Among the Qingdao enterprises that attended, Hai Chuang Hui (HCH) – an incubator and start-up accelerator founded by consumer appliances giant Haier – emerged as a promising partner.

Soon after, the two parties signed a memorandum of understanding and agreed to cooperate on empowering SMEs and start-ups from around the world, especially those from the Chinese Mainland, to expand globally.

Through this partnership, Fidnam provides expertise in finance, tax, legal,

marketing and business strategy, while HCH leverages its vast industry network and innovation ecosystem.

Together, they aim to create a powerful launchpad for ambitious enterprises to thrive in the global market.

Fidnam's experience underscores that Hong Kong remains the most effective launchpad for dealing with the complexity and scale of the mainland market.

“Hong Kong's platform makes it easier for foreign investors to set up enterprises, develop business and capture the mainland's untapped blue ocean market,” Mr Pedrinoni concluded.



Photo: Cloudbreak Pharma

Hong Kong IPO boosts US biotech firm Cloudbreak Pharma

City's financial expertise and science talents provide a catalyst for growth.

Cloudbreak Pharma, a US-based biotech company, wants to develop better treatments for people suffering from eye diseases.

Eyesight problems are becoming more prevalent, as people around the world grow older, driving investment in drug development and research.

Short-sightedness is also on the rise among younger generations, who are spending more time on their phones and tablets.

Pharma companies are taking note. According to market researchers Frost & Sullivan, the global pharmaceutical market for eye treatments is expected to surge past the US\$70 billion mark by 2033, rising rapidly from around US\$40 billion in 2023.

Opportunities abound for new players, highlights Cloudbreak's Founder and CEO Jinsong Ni.

Dr Ni created the company in 2015, after some 20 years working for pharmaceutical giants Pfizer and Allergan.

Cloudbreak is focusing on conditions that have few treatment options or for which existing remedies have too many unwanted side effects.

"Our goal is to develop first-in-class and best-in-class treatments to address unmet medical needs," Dr Ni explains.

To advance its mission, the firm recently raised US\$78 million after listing on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange (HKEX) in July.

“I recognised the significant market demand and investment interest not only in Hong Kong, but throughout the entire Asia region.”

Jinsong Ni

Founder and CEO
Cloudbreak Pharma

In May, to further streamline the listing process for tech and biotech companies, HKEX and the Securities and Futures Commission unveiled a dedicated technology enterprises channel.

For Cloudbreak, access to sophisticated institutional investors who are familiar with biotech investment cycles was especially beneficial.

Hong Kong's world-class financial services ecosystem can support efficient capital raising for future development needs.

Executives also value the city's position as a regional hub to facilitate partnerships with both Chinese and international pharmaceutical players.

High-tech Hong Kong

Cloudbreak, which runs R&D centres in the US and the Chinese Mainland, is also leveraging Hong Kong's science talent pool for drug development.

The company is working on a new dry eye treatment with the Centre for Eye and Vision Research (CEVR), a partnership between The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Canada's University of Waterloo.

CEVR, which focuses on research to prevent vision loss in the ageing population and preserve healthy vision, is part of InnoHK, a government-backed programme spanning AI, healthcare and robotics.

Cloudbreak and CEVR's collaboration was forged at the [Asia Summit on Global Health \(ASGH\)](#).

This annual conference, organised by the HKTDC, fosters impactful healthcare-related thought leadership, connections and partnerships.

The HKTDC facilitated a memorandum of understanding for strategic cooperation between Cloudbreak and CEVR, which was signed at [ASGH](#), to explore opportunities to collaborate on research in ocular science.

At the event, Dr Ni experienced strong engagement from the medical and scientific communities as well as widespread interest from biotech and pharmaceutical investors, opening doors to his firm's eventual listing in Hong Kong.

“I recognised the significant market demand and investment interest not only in Hong Kong, but throughout the entire Asia region.”

Revenue from Cloudbreak's IPO will help fast-track plans to commercialise its most promising treatments.

One advanced drug candidate is an emulsion used to treat pterygium, a condition commonly called surfer's eye. Excessive exposure to UV light, mainly from sunshine, can cause a membrane to grow on the eyeball, making it more difficult to see.

Another commercially promising asset, an eyedrop for juvenile myopia, has been cleared by the US Food and Drug Administration for Phase III clinical trials, the final testing stage before being submitted for regulatory approval.

“We are fortunate to have garnered support from both the ophthalmic medical community and the investment sector,” Dr Ni says. “This enables us to develop crucial medications that enhance the quality of life for patients.”

The eyecare innovator, which is still in the testing phase for drugs in its pipeline, went public via HKEX's Chapter 18A listing framework, designed for pre-revenue biotech companies.

These new rules, introduced in 2018, helped Hong Kong become one of the world's biggest fundraising hubs for biotech.

Smart screening for silent killer

Kulia Labs targets Asia's cancer challenge through its Hong Kong base.

Oesophageal cancer is significantly more common in Asia than in Western countries, with East Asia having the highest incidence rates globally.

With over half a million new cases each year, China bears the world's heaviest burden of oesophageal cancer.

Yet, a significant number of cases are detected too late for effective treatment.

A US-based company is seeking to address this urgent challenge through an innovative screening solution designed to expand access and enable earlier detection.

Kulia Labs is now poised to launch its technology in Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland via its regional headquarters in Hong Kong with strategic support from the HKTDC.

Early detection, global impact

Traditionally, oesophageal cancer screening requires patients to undergo anaesthesia, while a camera device is inserted via the throat into the oesophagus under the supervision of a gastroenterologist.

Since these procedures must be performed in hospital settings, they are expensive, time-consuming and often limited to only the most serious cases.

Kulia Labs' EndoVu™ solution, however, changes all this by deploying a single use endoscope – a tube with camera – to identify potential cancer within five minutes under the supervision of a nurse or technician, eliminating the need for hospital procedures.

The images from EndoVu™ are then analysed by advanced AI algorithms to

“The city’s high standards and global reputation for advanced medicine open doors in Mainland China and across the wider region.”

Winn Hong

Founder and CEO
Kulia Labs

screening answer for oesophageal cancer. We think we can fill this need.”

The invasive and costly nature of traditional oesophageal cancer screening may help explain a troubling disparity: while the cancer ranked 11th in terms of incidence globally in 2022, it climbed to 7th in mortality – even higher than prostate cancer, according to World Health Organisation data.

This gap underscores the urgent need for more accessible solutions to detect the disease earlier.

“The advantage of EndoVu™ is that it is inexpensive, easy and quick to use,” explained Mr Hong.

“Moreover, it is highly scalable. It can be delivered anywhere because there is no need for anaesthesia or a physician.”

Hong Kong: Medical innovation gateway

In 2022, Kulia Labs first contacted the HKTDC to explore establishing an office in Hong Kong, attracted by the city’s convenient access to Asia’s major medical systems, English-speaking environment, robust common law framework and strong patent protection regime.

These factors made Hong Kong an ideal launchpad for expanding their innovative solution across the region.

With support from the HKTDC, Kulia Labs registered a local entity and settled in Hong Kong Science Park in 2023.

The HKTDC invited the imaging tech firm to exhibit at its [Asia Summit on Global Health](#), the region’s major medical and healthcare conference held every May.

At the Summit, the company engaged with potential investors and explored partnerships with distributors to deploy its technology in the Hong Kong market.

“As a universal healthcare system, Hong Kong is an ideal place to demonstrate our technology,” said Mr Hong.

“The city’s high standards and global reputation for advanced medicine open doors in Mainland China and across the wider region.”

Last year, a high-level Hong Kong delegation visited Los Angeles to learn more about the US medical sector’s latest developments and trends.

The [HKTDC’s Los Angeles office](#) helped Mr Hong network with the delegation members and explore ways to collaborate with key Hong Kong medical industry players.

For now, Mr Hong is focused on building his team in Hong Kong ahead of starting clinical trials in China in late 2025.

He cites the city’s highly trained workforce as a key advantage enabling operational readiness.

Kulia Labs is also prioritising automation and seeking strategic partners to support expansion in other markets, such as Japan and India.

Mr Hong highlights the HKTDC’s crucial contribution in accelerating the company’s growth.

“The HKTDC has been very helpful in providing the necessary information to get us started and support our progress. We would not have gotten to where we are as quickly without their help.”

determine if the patient requires further clinical investigation.

Founder and CEO Winn Hong shared the unexpected journey behind the innovation: “We didn’t start the company with the idea of screening for oesophageal cancer.”

“But as we explored the landscape, it became clear that, unlike breast or prostate cancer, there is no mass

A collaborative approach to smart city challenges

Finnish cooperative SCIC is broadening its network via Hong Kong.

Finland's Smart City Innovation Cluster (SCIC) wants to bring service providers, research institutes and cities closer together to foster new solutions for urban challenges and infrastructure development.

The cooperative venture, which represents more than 120 leading players in the smart field, bundles together different services to address specific requests from city planners and project owners.

These bespoke, multivendor offerings can help accelerate adoption of the latest solutions and innovations, while making it easier for smaller companies and technical specialists to be involved in large-scale projects.

"Our proposals include a minimum of three companies," recounts SCIC's CEO Pertti Kortejärvi. "We don't promote

single company offerings. It's always an integrated solution."

The cluster is working on more than 70 projects worldwide. Asia is a major focus and growth area. The ASEAN region, for example, is home to large-scale greenfield developments that can incorporate original smart city concepts at the planning stage.

Indonesia's planned new capital city Nusantara is under construction on the island of Borneo using smart and sustainable principles.

Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor network, which spans three provinces, aims to create a major new economic hub on the country's eastern seaboard.

SCIC is helping facilitate technical proposals for both projects, among others in the region and further afield.



“The Belt and Road Summit and InnoEX both provided good negotiations, good networking and information, especially for new concepts for smart solutions.”

Pertti Kortejärvi

CEO

Smart City Innovation Cluster

The HKTDC's *Belt and Road Summit* – co-organised with the Hong Kong SAR Government – is an annual conference gathering key officials, business leaders and innovators from Belt and Road countries and beyond to deepen multilateral cooperation.

The Finnish venture's CEO sounded out funding schemes and potential investors for his proposal during the Summit, while connecting with a variety of solution providers to broaden and diversify the cooperative's membership base.

He further strengthened his network in April this year at HKTDC's annual *InnoEX* tech fair, a vibrant international business platform for next-gen solutions.

These connections included a promising collaboration with a Hong Kong drone provider to sell its rescue drone system in Europe and Asia, among others.

“The *Belt and Road Summit* and *InnoEX* both provided good negotiations, good networking and information, especially for new concepts for smart solutions,” Mr Kortejärvi noted.

Mr Kortejärvi presented a tailored package of technical and service solutions for a smart toll road in Nusantara at a project investment session on transport and logistics infrastructure at the 2024 *Belt and Road Summit* in Hong Kong.

The cooperative first started leveraging the Hong Kong platform to raise its profile and expand its reach in Asian markets and beyond, following a meeting with the HKTDC's then Executive Director Margaret Fong in Helsinki in 2024.

On this occasion, which was part of an HKTDC market visit to Finland and Denmark, Mr Kortejärvi expressed keen interest in partnering with Hong Kong service providers for SCIC's projects.

HKTDC's London office, which also oversees the Nordic markets, continued the conversation, providing intelligence on Hong Kong and relevant opportunities for the venture that paved the way for participation in the *Belt and Road Summit* and *InnoEX*.

Hong Kong has long been committed to smart city development to improve the city's quality of life and urban efficiency through innovation and technology.

The Hong Kong SAR Government released the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong in 2017, which highlighted 76 initiatives in six areas: smart mobility, smart living, smart

environment, smart people, smart government and smart economy.

The follow-up Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong 2.0 was published in 2020, outlining more than 130 smart city initiatives across the same areas.

Achievements include the widespread adoption of popular digital services, like the iAM Smart platform and Faster Payment System. A Traffic Data Analytics System is in operation to enhance traffic efficiency, while a Green Tech Fund has been created to support research in areas, like decarbonisation.

Hong Kong's commitment to smart city development, complemented by its fundamental strengths and advantages, makes it an ideal partner for SCIC projects, remarks Mr Kortejärvi.

“Together, we can change the narratives of tomorrow's cities.”

Smart building innovator eyes vast opportunities in Asia

Britain's Unifi.id is opening a regional HQ in Hong Kong.

UK proptech specialist Unifi.id is looking to expand its footprint in Asia, starting with its new regional headquarters in Hong Kong due to open in November.

"For the next one to two years, our focus is clear," outlines Paul Sheedy, the company's Founder and CEO.

"We are building out our Hong Kong business and the wider area around Hong Kong, where growth opportunities are vast."

Unifi.id has developed a suite of building intelligence services that promises to make buildings safer, smarter and greener.

The firm's sensors, smartcards and AI-driven analytical software are designed to be compatible with existing building management systems,

combining real-time insights on occupancy rates with datasets on energy use, fire safety and security.

This modular, subscription-based platform can help rein in energy costs and generate audit-ready ESG reporting data, while improving safety procedures and risk profiles for insurance companies.

"The problem we set out to solve is easy to say, but hard to do: make occupancy and life safety visible, verifiable and useful in the moment," Mr Sheedy explains.

The company is currently focusing on five sectors, in which its solutions can deliver a sizeable impact: education, high-rise public housing, hospitality, corporate real estate and industrial sites.

“For the next one to two years, our focus is clear. We are building out our Hong Kong business and the wider area around Hong Kong, where growth opportunities are vast.”

Paul Sheedy

Founder and CEO
Unifi.id

Some well-known organisations are already on board in the UK, including Canary Wharf, Chubb, Deloitte and more.

Asian expansion

Now, Mr Sheedy is looking to seize more opportunities in Asia after connecting with the [London office](#) of the HKTDC.

Through its network, the HKTDC helped Unifi.id become part of the UK Pavilion at this year's [InnoEX](#), a major platform for smart city innovation and technology commercialisation staged every April in Hong Kong by the Council.

Mr Sheedy made many valuable connections at [InnoEX](#). He also signed a distribution agreement with the International Digital Economies Association (IDEA) to support Unifi.id's market entry, strategy and business growth in the Philippines.

IDEA, a consortium that aims to drive inclusive growth in emerging digital economies, was launched in Hong Kong in 2024 at the [Business of Innovation and Technology Week](#), a joint initiative driven by the Hong Kong SAR Government and HKTDC.

To further accelerate Unifi.id's goals in Asia, the HKTDC also provided targeted introductions to major landlords, system integrators and insurers.

In addition, we supplied guidance on market entry and procurement norms, together with marketing opportunities to potential buyers.

“I have always found the staff at HKTDC to be outstanding in their organisation and focus on enabling growth for companies like ourselves,” Mr Sheedy remarks.

A robust ecosystem

At the same time, Hong Kong is an ideal launchpad to help a proptech company scale up in Asia, he notes.

Hong Kong's connected ecosystem – strengthened by the close collaboration between owners, integrators, insurers and public bodies – helps shorten the path from pilot to scale.

Meanwhile, energy optimisation and evacuation planning are especially complex in the city's densely packed high rises, offering good showcases for Unifi.id's capabilities.

The firm aims to get two to three flagship pilots up and running in Hong Kong. These can show how Unifi.id's tools can deliver results in complex, multi-tower estates in conjunction with existing systems, while standing up to board and regulatory scrutiny.

Proven deployments from Hong Kong can help accelerate rollout across two of Asia's most dynamic regions and key target markets for the proptech company: the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and ASEAN trading bloc.

Mr Sheedy is also leveraging Hong Kong's expertise in innovation and technology via an R&D collaboration with the Hong Kong Science & Technology Parks Corporation, facilitated by the HKTDC.

This research will focus on two areas: passive energy harvesting to make it cheaper to run Unifi.id's sensors, removing a major barrier to widescale uptake, and more AI predictive software models, to further empower building owners and managers.

“Customers don't just want dashboards, they want outcomes. Safer evacuations, lower bills, credible net zero reporting and proof that their risk profile is improving.”

Lalamove extends its global reach

Hong Kong unicorn is targeting high-growth markets.

Lalamove, a Hong Kong tech unicorn, continues to broaden its global foothold, launching services in the Europe, Middle East and North Africa (EMEA) markets for the first time.

An on-demand delivery platform, Lalamove is now present in 14 markets worldwide after rolling out localised offerings in Türkiye last November and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in May, all sporting the tech company's distinctive orange livery.

Executives are also looking to bolster their regional ambitions by setting up in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the largest economy in the Middle East, later this year.

The moves reflect the Hong Kong firm's aim to launch in growth markets, where e-commerce is commonplace and urban populations are rising.

The development of new transport infrastructure in Türkiye – notably including the China-Europe Middle Corridor trade route – is driving up demand for logistics services, making it an attractive location for Lalamove.

Türkiye is also home to more than 3 million SMEs – a key customer segment for the on-demand delivery platform – which form the backbone of the country's domestic economy.

The UAE is also a major transport and logistics hub, connecting Asia, Europe and Africa, where SMEs contribute more than 60% to the country's non-oil GDP.

Data insights and experiences from Türkiye and the UAE can also help finetune strategies for more market launches in other promising geographies, explains Gary Hui, Lalamove's Director of Driver Operations and Market Expansion.



“We are thrilled to see the HKTDC provide the springboard for local start-ups and SMEs to grow beyond Hong Kong.”

Gary Hui

Director, Driver Operations and Market Expansion
Lalamove

Türkiye, which shared details of investment incentives and assistance for setting up in the country.

The HKTDC also provided comprehensive business advisory and compiled detailed financial and legal reports – including guidance on setting up a company, taxation and labour law – to help Lalamove bring its innovative tech to Türkiye.

The Middle East has long been on the firm's radar. Company Founder and CEO Shing Chow joined an *HKTDC mission to KSA and the UAE* in 2023 – led by Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive John Lee – having identified the region as a strategic priority.

Providing further support, *HKTDC's regional office in Dubai* introduced the Hong Kong unicorn to the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism and the Ministry of Transport in Saudi Arabia to gather more local policy and business insights from these key stakeholders.

HKTDC's Dubai team also set up meetings with local business chambers and prospective customers to help

facilitate entry into the KSA and UAE, while sharing insights into local regulations, operational requirements and licensing procedures.

Looking to the future

In addition to EMEA, Lalamove is focused on seizing growth opportunities and increasing its market share in two other emerging regions: the ASEAN bloc and Latin America.

The company already runs services in Southeast Asia's six largest economies as well as in Brazil and Mexico in Latin America.

In addition to its home market of Hong Kong, it is also present in the Chinese Mainland, which accounts for the bulk of company revenue, as well as in Bangladesh and Japan.

At the end of last year, Lalamove had 16.7 million monthly active users worldwide, leveraging Hong Kong's tech-savvy talent pool and financial infrastructure to rapidly scale up since making its debut 12 years ago.

The pioneering tech giant also continues to diversify its service offering and

explore new opportunities, testing deliveries via drones in Hong Kong, while providing ride-hailing services beside on-demand delivery services in Southeast Asia.

Hong Kong's vibrant start-up ecosystem – supported by incubation and acceleration programmes, investor networks and government support schemes – offers a fertile environment for growth and innovation.

“Entrepreneurs in Hong Kong have the vision and talents to expand their business to the international stage,” Mr Hui notes.

“We are thrilled to see the HKTDC provide the springboard for local start-ups and SMEs to grow beyond Hong Kong.”

“We will continue to assess the potential of expanding our operations into neighbouring markets in EMEA.”

International growth

The *HKTDC's Istanbul consultant office* opened doors to accelerate Lalamove's EMEA expansion strategy.

The HKTDC introduced the tech company to the Investment and Finance Office of the Presidency of the Republic of

Medtech start-up leverages city's innovation ecosystem

Supernova Academy revolutionises medical training through its regional base in Hong Kong.

Ensuring equal access to high-quality resources in physician training is set to become easier thanks to innovative technology showcased by Supernova Academy at the [Asia Summit on Global Health \(ASGH\)](#), the region's premier gathering of medical and business leaders organised by the HKTDC.

The start-up's digital training platform integrates high-resolution 3D human anatomy imagery, interactive workbooks and AI-generated videos with augmented and virtual reality, enabling medical students to perform simulated operations in a virtual environment.

The technology not only addresses the challenges of outdated medical curricula and the global shortage of cadavers used by training doctors in dissection,

but also dramatically improves access to cutting-edge medical knowledge for remote learners worldwide.

Founded in 2020 in Los Angeles, the company partners with colleges in the US and UK and offers its own online courses for learners interested in anatomy.

In 2024, the firm decided to expand to Hong Kong, driven by Founder and CEO Irfan Khan's recognition of China's critical healthcare gap.

According to the World Bank, the patient-doctor ratio stood at approximately 2.4 doctors per 1,000 people in China in 2020, compared to an OECD average of 3.4 doctors per 1,000 people.



“Hong Kong’s ecosystem has played an astronomical role in securing our company’s funding, marketing, branding and positioning. It is a one-stop shop for global business expansion.”

Irfan Khan

Founder and CEO
Supernova Academy

The company's move is timely, as the city is poised to launch a new medical school, and the new Chinese Medicine Hospital of Hong Kong is expected to open in late 2025.

Hong Kong has also been implementing a series of measures to deepen cooperation on healthcare with cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Last January, the HKTDC quickly helped Supernova set up its local branch thanks to Hong Kong's speedy business registration procedures, an advantage among many that has earned the city the title of the world's third most competitive economy, according to the International Institute for Management Development.

We also facilitated the company's entry into the Hong Kong Science & Technology Parks Corporation's Global Connect, a 1-year soft-landing programme for overseas start-ups.

Through activities, including business matching, funding opportunities, networking and mentoring, the initiative offers a comprehensive

introduction to the thriving Hong Kong start-up ecosystem and a pathway to its competitive 3-year incubation programme.

Within a few weeks, the start-up's team pitched to investors at the Digital Universities Asia conference hosted by Lingnan University and met potential users at a forum on cancer.

At [ASGH](#), the company's demonstration and pitching presentation drew keen interest from medical schools and clinics, marking a promising start in its global business journey. The start-up's profile also received a boost from television coverage organised by the HKTDC.

Supernova's long-term vision is rooted in a commitment to save lives by tackling insufficient training resources, explained Mr Khan.

“Our innovation is designed to overcome the socio-economic barriers to quality medical education. By providing cost-effective and technologically-advanced digital anatomy assets accessible from a simple laptop - whether in downtown

Hong Kong or remote Sichuan – we're democratising access to essential training.”

And Hong Kong plays a pivotal role in his vision.

“Being part of China, Hong Kong is a fertile ground for technology and innovation with prominent universities excelling in research and development and an advanced start-up and investor ecosystem, resulting in a vibrant region teeming with great minds.”

Mr Khan pays full credit to the HKTDC and its partners in putting his business onto the right track.

“Hong Kong's ecosystem has played an astronomical role in securing our company's funding, marketing, branding and positioning. It is a one-stop shop for global business expansion.”

Faced with China's urgent demand to scale medical training, Mr Khan saw an opportunity to leverage Supernova's proprietary technology and contacted the HKTDC about expanding into Hong Kong.



Hong Kong Trade Development Council
38/F Office Tower, Convention Plaza
1 Harbour Road, Wan Chai
Hong Kong

香港貿易發展局
香港灣仔港灣道1號會展廣場辦公大樓38樓

(852) 1830 668

www.hktdc.com



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