

China Is Setting Up Various Growth Engines

The post-pandemic reopened China is boosting its economy with an array of growth engines.

Two mainland cities and two SARs are tasked to lead the urban agglomeration of the Greater Bay Area. Hong Kong's effort to reinforce its position as an international hub for financial and logistical services is finding initial success in its estimated US\$3.83 billion committed foreign investment.

The country is strengthening its commitment to the private sector with a new, Private Economic Development Bureau, within the NDRC.

To provide the basis for sustainable development, China is developing its second batch of national parks after successfully rolling out a first batch in 2021.

Stay tuned for results.

Anita Tang, Managing Director



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China Sets Up Bureau For Private Development To Inject Impetus Into The Economic Recovery

China has set up a bureau under the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the country's top economic planner specializing in promoting the private economy's development amid a number of policies designed to ramp up growth of the sector.

Cong Liang, deputy head of NDRC, told a press conference September 4 that the main responsibilities of the new bureau include tracking, studying, and analyzing development of the private economy, coordinating and organizing the formulation of the growth of private investment.

In late July, NDRC unveiled 17 measures to encourage private investment further. It also worked with multiple departments and jointly released 28 measures to boost the growth of private enterprises in market access, factor support, legal guarantees, enterprise

service, and business environment.

To strengthen financial support for private investment, Cong said the Commission has given full play to the investment-lending linkage mechanism established with seven banks and referred the first batch of 715 private investment projects to them.

Beijing released a 31-point plan in July, according to the *South China Morning Post*, to support the private sector, which was hit hard by three years of zero-Covid controls and has made slow progress in China's post-pandemic recovery. "Leadership pledged to make the private sector 'bigger, better and stronger' just as it did for the state-owned companies.

"China has more than 47 million registered private companies – the vast majority of which are small players – plus more than 100 million self-employed businesses."

China To Establish New National Parks

China will establish a new batch of national parks, including Huanghekou, Qianjiangyuan-Baishanzu and Kalamayli, announced Guan Zhi-ou, head of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, according to reporting by *China Daily*.

Speaking at the second National Park Forum held in Xining, capital of northwest China's Qinghai Province on August 19, Guan said China has adopted the most stringent measures to strengthen the protection of the authenticity and integrity of the ecosystem and promote continuous improvement of ecological functions.

In 2021, China established the first batch of national parks. These parks included the Sanjiangyuan National Park, the Giant Panda National Park, the Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park, the Hainan Tropical Rainforest National Park, and the Wuyishan National Park, are home to nearly 30 percent of the key terrestrial wildlife species found in the country.



China's Netizens Pass One Billion Mark

China had almost 1.08 billion netizens as of June, 2023, 11.09 million more than the number at the end of last year, according to the China Internet Network Information Center, reported in *China Daily*.

Online platforms providing services relating to videos, car-hauling, trip bookings and literature all witnessed fast growth in the number of users in the first six months this year, according to the report.

The number of video users rose to 1.04 billion as of June, an increase of 13.80 million from December 2022.

People booking travel services online increased 30.01 million year-on-year.

The construction of China's digital infrastructure has also been accelerated, and about 2.6 million smartphone apps have been provided in the domestic market for users. Mobile-phone base stations now total 11.29 million across the country.

High School Graduates Warned Of Fake Universities

Education authorities and experts have warned high school graduate not to fall for tricks by fake universities as they weigh their college options, the *China Daily* has reported.

"A list of hundreds of fake universities has been trending online to remind students who have not performed well in the national college entrance exam, or *gaokao*, not to enroll in such universities."

The universities usually have names similar to legitimate ones. For example, one fake university is named China University of Posts and Telecommunications, similar to Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications.

The universities usually claim that as long as students pay enough money, they can attend no matter the *gaokao* score. Some said they have "enrollment quota from insiders."

Some of the institutions may cooperate with standard universities to open "training institutions," but then tell parents and students that they are part of the university.

"The Ministry of Education has reminded students and parents to check the university's authenticity after they receive admission letters."

The Ministry said standard enrollment does not involve any monetary transaction and if an institution asks for money for an enrollment quota, they are not to be believed.

Hong Kong To Get US\$3.8 Billion Investment

Hong Kong's effort to attract foreign investment has shown tentative signs of success, with about 30 "strategic" companies committed to setting up their businesses in the city, according to reporting by *South China Morning Post*.

Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po said the companies will invest an estimated HK\$30 billion (US\$ 3.83 billion) in the city, creating about 10,000 jobs. Chan spoke at the annual forum of the Hong Kong Green Finance Association on October 4.

"We have set our sights on attracting strategic enterprises, those with cutting edge technologies to settle here in Hong Kong so we can create a more vibrant ecosystem," Chan said.

Established last December, the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises (OASES) was charged with targeting businesses in the life and health sciences, artificial intelligence, data science, fintech, advanced manufacturing, new materials and new energy, said Chan.

"The innovation and technological strength of Hong Kong will be further boosted by deepening collaboration with our sister cities in the Greater Bay Area."

With its strength in basic research, commercialization, finance and advanced manufacturing, the Greater Bay Area is "destined to become a green tech and green finance center" powered by a complete financial and industrial ecosystem, Chan said.

Greater Bay Area Built Around Four Cities

The Greater Bay Area (GBA) is a megalopolis consisting of nine cities and two special administrative regions in South China. It is envisioned as an integrated economic area aimed at taking a leading role by 2030. GBA has a total population of 86.17 million people (5% of China's total population and is expected to reach 100 million people by 2030). It is the largest and most populated urban area and is among the four largest areas in the world, comparable with the bay areas of New York City, Tokyo, and San Francisco.

GBA includes nine mega cities in Guangdong province: Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen, Huizhou, and Zhaoqing as well as two special administrative regions, Hong Kong and Macao. Surrounding the Pearl River Delta with a total area of 56,000 km (corresponds to the area of Croatia), it is the largest and richest economic region in South China.

The Greater Bay Area is a critical export hub, accounting for 37% of China's exports. This is due to the large airports and railway stations connected by a modern transportation system. GBA hosts three of the top ten container ports and five international airports (Hong Kong International Airport, Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Macau International Airport and Zhuhai Jinwan Airport). These airports account for an air-freight traffic bigger than San Francisco, New York, and Tokyo combined.

The core idea behind the development of the Greater Bay Area was laid out in a plan released by the Chinese central government in February 2019. This saw the region evolving into an international first class bay area by 2035.

To realize this goal, four designated "core cities" will be developed according to their comparative advantages. First, Hong Kong. It is planned to strengthen Hong Kong's position as an international hub for financial and logistical services. Second, Macau. The former Portuguese colony is envisioned to develop into a center for international tourism, leisure and culture exchange, as well as trading hub with Portuguese-speaking countries. Third, Guangzhou. The city is planned as a commerce, transportation, and education hub. Fourth, Shenzhen. The city will focus on innovation. The Shenzhen government has just unveiled a 20-point plan to boost funding for local tech companies. With each city specializing further, the GBA is supposed to become a "a vibrant world-class city cluster." (Data from Wikipedia)



Photo by Kiri Debrec on Unsplash

Cleveland Art Museum Features China's Diversity

Although little known in the West, China's Jiangnan region has played a pivotal role in thousands of years of the country's history, and the Cleveland Museum of Art has mounted a major exhibition, "China's Southern Paradise: Treasures from the Lower Yangzi Delta," from Sept 10, 2023, to Jan 7, 2024, to reveal the region's long-running importance. *(Photo from the Museum's website)*

"It's as if Ohio produced 20% of the GDP of the United States," said Clarissa von Spee, curator with the Museum. "It's pretty powerful, this region has remained so for centuries." It has produced many products most strongly associated with China, including jade and silk.

With well over 200 offering from dozens of public and private collections – including seven museums in mainland China – the exhibit gives audiences an important opportunity to see sides of China rarely seen in the West.

"China is not just one entity in terms of climate, geography, language, ethnicity" said von Spee, according to the September 5, 2023, *The Guardian* article. "We think mostly in terms of Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, and I hope that this show helps audiences understand how diverse China is."

Laying out the exhibition according to historical periods was very much in keeping with the way art and culture have flourished in Jiangnan. Von Spee said she consciously shaped the exhibit around waves of migration that kept the region dynamic and that helped inspire so much cultural and artistic renewal. Highlights include a rubbing of the Eulogy for "Burying a Crane," an inscription in rock that dates to 6th century AD and that has come to be known as one of the foremost masterpieces of Chinese calligraphy.

It has inspired countless scholars to try to understand its eccentric memorial to the death of a beloved crane.

Von Spee said she hopes shows such as "China's Southern Paradise" will help reduce tensions between China and the United States. Particularly now when geopolitics had heightened the rivalry between these superpowers and the pandemic has caused increased racism against Chinese-Americans living in the U.S. She hopes this show will foster mutual understanding.

She said, "When we better understand each other and our cultures, that triggers respect: Once you learn more and know each other better, you have far more respect for each other, especially now as the U.S. and China have a strained relationship, culture is our resource to transcend this tension. There's nothing better than having an exhibition that counters biased ideas. I do know that our partners in China see it the same way; the museums are very excited to have this partnership and exchange."



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