

Non-Fiction – Group 2 WINNER

Future Facts of the Greater-Bay-Area

Ying Wa Primary School, Lee, Ching Ho Jadon – 11

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area or simply Greater Bay Area (GBA) is a megalopolis, which is the Chinese Government's master plan for Hong Kong, Macau and nine more cities in Guangdong Province, with an aim to build a business and technology hub.

The GBA consists of Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen, Huizhou, as well as Hong Kong and Macau. These eleven cities will establish themselves as key hubs for different sectors: Hong Kong will be the international finance navigation and trade centre as well as a transport hub; Macau will be an international tourism city and a platform for trades with Portuguese speaking countries like Brazil; Guangzhou will take a leading role as an administrative hub while Shenzhen will expand its leading role as a special economic zone and tech hub; Dongguan is transforming itself from the world's factory into more of a high-tech manufacturing base. Other cities in the region will also be involved, with the government already spending billions on massive infrastructure projects.

With a total population of 67.65 million residing across a total area of 56,500, this region is one of the most developed and vibrant areas in China. Featuring three of the world's top ten ports in Shenzhen (3rd), HK(5th) and Guangzhou(7th), the GBA represented approximately 12.5% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2016. The development of the GBA initiative is designed to strengthen infrastructure linkages among the cities involved. In fact, the existing GBA already possesses notable economic strength and is comparable to the other leading bay areas around the world.

Apparently, the GBA scheme brought quite an excitement to many start-ups in Hong Kong as they look forward to the benefits of being a part of a vast market of 70 million people. Recently, the Hong Kong Economic Journal (HKEJ) sat down with ISTOP founder, Tyler Mok, who shared his views about the opportunities in the GBA. Mok thinks that the GBA is a once-in-a-century opportunity for start-ups in Hong Kong. Although the mainland start-ups possess certain advantages in terms of human resources, the strength of Hong Kong start-ups lies in their ability to innovate and their global vision for business. For start-ups that have the ambition to enter the GBA, they should approach by seeking projects and products that are scarce in the domestic market there. Take health food, medicines and care products, in these categories, products from Hong Kong brands can give mainland consumers greater confidence.

Creating the GBA of the future means both addressing the opportunities and challenges that the region faces. There are three main expectations that the GBA would like to achieve at around 2050. First, the GBA expects its cities to foster further economic reform and openings in the future. The GBA is supposed to be an experimental zone for further economic reform and opening in China as a whole. Second, the GBA also would like to

enhance their business promotion in the region. Better connectivity and greater cooperation around the GBA will foster opportunities for new or renewed joint promotion opportunities. These include opportunities in investment promotion, research and development, education, medicine and healthcare, tourism, major events and promotion in specific industries. Third, another expectation from the GBA in the future is they would like to create regional development initiatives. New connectivity and cooperation inside and outside the GBA should allow for regional development initiatives that might have been impractical until now.

At GBA, the future of transportation is very important. They understand that their clients are no longer just looking for wider roads to accommodate more traffic. They are looking for solutions that take technology and data to the next level to provide safety, efficiency and cost savings. Resulting in safer roads and bridges, a more efficient trip to the grocery store or hauling goods from one state to another. The GBA's team of experts handle jobs on every level including municipal, county, Department of Transportation, small mill-and-overlays to highly complex interchanges and bridge design. The expansion of destinations served by the high-speed rail from West Kowloon is likely to make the Hung Hom Station redundant as a border crossing point. Allowing for potential opportunities for re-zoning and re-development. China has fast-tracked further expansion of the CRH system, the network, which extends to 30 of the country's 33 provincial-level administrative divisions and runs for 29,000 km, is set to reach 38,000 km by 2025. Estimated at around 10 years later, the High Speed Rail will be expanding to all eleven cities of the GBA and more mainland cities.

With improved connections between Mainland cities and the rest of the world, the 'front shop, back factory' model of division of labour between Hong Kong and other GBA cities may no longer be fully applicable, and a new mode of collaboration should be sought. We must bear in mind that the development of the GBA is not at all a zero-sum relationship for the cities involved. Rather, cities within the GBA should utilize their respective comparative advantages in producing certain goods or services to supplement each other. For instance, some people asserted that with close ties with global cities like Hong Kong, Foshan secured linkages to the rest of the world. As a result, the latter could focus on the development of skills and capacity in specialized sectors, such as lighting and furniture manufacturing. Should this recommendation be adopted the eleven GBA cities can strengthen their industrial upgrading and integration through the utilization of complementary resources and connections. By achieving this goal, the development of the GBA will enhance the overall competitiveness of the region, which in turn will contribute to the national economic growth.

Being part of the GBA and through the collaboration process, Hong Kong may find a new direction for its economy to develop as well.