

Upgraded bilateral project to play an important role in bay area

By CHEN HONG
chenhong@chinadaily.com.cn

The Sino-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City is getting bolder in its reforms and experimentation, following an official upgrade centering on its ambitions to be a world-class knowledge city, an outstanding source of innovation in the region and a global talent magnet.

According to a framework agreement signed by the Chinese and Singaporean governments on Monday, the iconic Sino-Singaporean collaboration project based in Guangzhou, capital of South China's Guangdong province, was officially elevated to the status of a State-level bilateral project.

Both governments pledged in the agreement that they will use the project to deepen cooperation in the fields of technological innovation, advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, intellectual property protection, smart city construction and urban management.

According to official figures, 1,216 companies have registered with SSGKC since 2010, with an aggregate registered capital of 125.8 billion yuan (\$18.1 billion) and about 91 billion yuan in fixed assets.

Industry insiders said companies registered with SSGKC, especially those in the sector of biomedicines — including General Electric, BeiGene and Innocare — will see explosive growth once they are put into operation in the next two years and will make the community a global rising star in its field.

Shortly after the agreement, the Guangzhou government said in a press release that as a model for a city's knowledge economy, SSGKC will undertake more innovative reforms and measures to make itself Guangzhou's top investment destination for global enterprises and an ideal place for them to develop.

Companies in the knowledge city will also enjoy incentive policies that the country has gradually rolled out for the pilot free trade



The Sino-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City is recently elevated to the status of a State-level project for bilateral cooperation. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

zones and will work together to create a model for the integration of advanced manufacturing with free trade, according to the local government.

The knowledge city is seeking approval from higher-level authorities to launch 18 innovation policies, across the fields of intellectual property, financial services, food and medicine supervision, and for the construction of key platforms, the press release said.

Innovation platform

Located at the apex of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, which aims to be a world-class technological hub, SSGKC will play a key role in creating an innovation platform for the coordinated development of the cities in the region. Officials said it can be

smoothly connected with the business environments of Hong Kong and Macao and promote multilateral economic collaborations.

Of particular interest, the local government said it aims to build a data exchange center and a technological innovation park for the greater bay area.

As the country's only pilot zone for intellectual property applications and protection, SSGKC will provide comprehensive services to protect the achievements of companies and facilitate their patent applications. Meanwhile, it plans to build an International IP Exchange Center for the Belt and Road Initiative, the local government said.

"One of the main reasons that overseas resources and companies are choosing to cooperate with the knowledge city or settle down here

is that SSGKC is relentless in its efforts to be as good as its global counterparts in terms of IP protection," said Yu Long, president of Sino-Singapore International Joint Research Institute.

More than 80 IP-related organizations and institutes are located in SSGKC, including the IP Court of Guangzhou, one of the patent examination centers of the China National Intellectual Property Administration and the first overseas representative office of the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore.

Li Lietao, co-founder and board chairman of Lion TCR Pte, a renowned clinical-stage biotechnology company in Asia, said his decision to move the company from Singapore to SSGKC two years ago has been proven wise.

He said he was attracted by the

familiar planning of SSGKC, which, initially based on the planning idea of Liu Thai-Ker, former master planner of Singapore, has been developed into a naturally harmonious community on the 123-square-kilometer plot.

"The government has rendered significant amount of support to innovative companies and attached much importance to IP protection," Li said.

BeiGene, a Chinese biotechnology company, is building its state-of-the-art manufacturing site in SSGKC.

The company was founded by Wang Xiaodong and John Oyler in 2010. Wang has served as a member of the National Academy of Sciences in the US and a foreign associate of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"Hopefully, some innovative medicines will be soon pro-



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Li Lietao, co-founder and board chairman of Lion TCR Pte

duced in the new plant in SSGKC and be distributed to the world in the future," said a senior executive of BeiGene.

"We believe our location in SSGKC could help us achieve greater influence because it could radiate to the surrounding markets such as China's Hong Kong and Macao as well as Southeast Asian countries," the executive said.

Herman Lee, vice-president for market and business development at Guangzhou CanSemi Technology Inc, said the upgrade of SSGKC is very encouraging for his company, and could help it further enrich its talent pool.

The company will invest a total of 7 billion yuan in facilities in SSGKC that will produce 12-inch wafers, of which the first phase is expected to be put into use in the fourth quarter of 2019 with a monthly production capacity of 20,000 wafers.

"As we know, SSGKC will enjoy the same treatment as the free trade zone in terms of market access, investment promotions and talent attraction after its upgrade. Meanwhile, many administrative services could be fulfilled inside the district, which could further improve efficiency, meaning more money for the companies involved," Lee said.