

City of Zhongshan courting ASEAN in bid to ‘go global’

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Businesses in the Pearl River Delta manufacturing hub of Zhongshan are being encouraged to invest in emerging markets, especially member states in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, during the ongoing Zhongshan Trade and Investment Fair that began on Wednesday.

Organizers have invited representatives from seven overseas industrial cooperative zones, six of them from ASEAN, to participate in the annual event in Guangdong province.

The overseas zones are promoting their favorable policies during the fair, hoping to attract investment from Zhongshan-based businesses.

“In the ‘go global’ strategy, ASEAN will particularly become a key investment destination for local businesses,” said Feng Yurong, vice-mayor of Zhongshan.

Products made in Zhongshan that are increasingly popular in Southeast Asia range from electronics to lighting, gas appliances, machinery and electronic entertainment goods, Feng said.

The ASEAN bloc is now Zhongshan’s fourth-largest foreign investor and fifth-biggest trading partner with \$439 million already invested in the city.

ASEAN investors are

mainly engaged in food, daily necessities, electronics, chemicals, furniture and shipping equipment made in Zhongshan, according to the local government.

Booming ASEAN industrial zones participating in the fair are seeking cooperative projects making small home appliances, hardware, electronic audio equipment and lighting.

“Projects promoted at the fair cater to local businesses that have been encouraged to transfer their manufacturing bases from Zhongshan to other areas,” Feng said. “It will be key new approach for both sides.”

Also attending the fair are about 200 business representatives from the United States and Japan, and officers from 13 foreign consulates and seven consul generals based in Guangzhou, capital city of Guangdong.

While the city’s traditional investment partners come from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao, Japan, the US and European Union, emerging markets have become key outbound investment destinations for Zhongshan businesses, Feng said.

“Local businesses need to diversify their products and investment to avoid negative impacts brought by the uncertain global economy,” Feng said.

International trade barriers and rising domestic production costs have lowered profits for many local traditional manufac-

turing businesses.

“Overseas investment is expected to help domestic businesses avoid international trade barriers and increase their competitiveness in the global market,” Feng said.

By March 20, some 255 foreign and domestic projects had confirmed deals during the annual Zhongshan fair, with investment totaling up to \$7.4 billion, according to sources at the local government.

Some 707 export deals worth \$1.9 billion will also be inked at this year’s event.

Since it started 22 years

ago, the fair has helped attract more than \$30 billion combined in foreign and domestic investment to Zhongshan, according to government statistics.

At this year’s fair, the local government held a special event to promote Zhongshan’s industrial development environment, with a highlight on a new zone in Cuiheng village, hometown of China’s late revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen.

“Cuiheng will not only be an industrial cluster area, but also a new city concept combining industry and recreation,” Feng said.



Participants at the March 28 opening ceremony of the Zhongshan Trade and Investment Fair under a statue of revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen, who was born nearby.



Zhongshan Party chief Xue Xiaofeng gives a speech to a seminar on talent development. The city is making increasing effort to recruit top professionals.

Matchmaking and attracting talent

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More than 70 high-level overseas professionals and researchers have attended a recruitment and matchmaking seminar at the annual Zhongshan Trade and Investment Fair underway in the Pearl River Delta city.

“Their latest research and potential projects fit well with our industrial development strategy and will help upgrade businesses in Zhongshan,” said Feng Yurong, the city’s vice-mayor.

We are making efforts to develop the city into a gathering place of high-level talent,” he said.

More than 50 of the participants are doctoral professionals from the United States, Canada, Australia, Britain, Germany, Russia and Japan.

“Seek investment partners, the technologies and projects they are bringing here include biotech, electronic information, new energy, environmentally friendly materials and cloud computing,” Feng said.

“We hope they will take back information they have learned in Zhongshan to better promote the city’s business and investment environment among overseas higher educational institutes and professionals.”

CHEN JIANGMEI
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF ZHONGSHAN PARTY COMMITTEE’S ORGANIZATION DEPARTMENT

As well, more than 500 recent graduates from 20 leading Chinese higher education institutes such as Tsinghua University and China University of Political Science and Law are participating in the recruiting effort.

“We will organize some local entrepreneurs to meet the participating talent and help build cooperation between them,” said Chen Jiangmei, deputy director of Zhongshan Party committee’s organization department.

A total of eight technology deals have now been signed during the fair, according to Chen.

Participants were also invited to visit some industrial zones in Zhongshan, she added.

“We hope they will take back information they have learned in Zhongshan to better promote the city’s business and investment environment among overseas higher educational institutes and professionals,” Chen said.

Local preferential policies to attract overseas talent include monthly subsidies when they relocate.

“We will organize more job fairs in the near future to meet the needs of local businesses,” Chen said.

For more information, please visit www.zszg.gov.cn, www.gdzs.lss.gov.cn and www.zs.gov.cn