

**How Hong Kong and the HKTDC Help Companies in  
Europe, Central Asia and Israel (ECAI)**

**I) Hong Kong's Advantages**

By basing in Hong Kong, partnering with Hong Kong companies and/or using Hong Kong services, companies in Europe, Central Asia and Israel (ECAI) can more easily access markets/business partners/investment internationally, including Mainland China (especially the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, other Asian countries, and Belt and Road-related economies.

1. Located in the heart of Asia, Hong Kong has close geographic, cultural and business links with the mainland and other parts of Asia. Hong Kong has decades of experience in international and mainland business. Hong Kong provides adequate protection for investors and contracts through its well-established legal and dispute resolution system. Arbitration awards issued in Hong Kong are enforceable in over 150 countries around the world, making Hong Kong ideal for settling disputes concerning cross-border transactions. Hong Kong also offers a business-friendly environment, with a low and simple tax regime, and a trilingual workforce (English, Cantonese and Putonghua).
2. In the mainland market, Hong Kong products, services and investments enjoy tariff-free access or preferential treatment under the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA). ECAI companies can set up in Hong Kong or partner with Hong Kong enterprises to enjoy these benefits.
3. In particular, Hong Kong has strong links with the Greater Bay Area, which is an innovation and technology hub. The city also has capabilities and expertise in technology research and development, commercialisation and trading. Hong Kong can help ECAI companies do business with/in the Greater Bay Area.
4. In the ASEAN market, Hong Kong products, services and investments enjoy tariff-free access or preferential treatment under the Hong Kong-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement and the related Investment Agreement. ECAI companies can set up in Hong Kong or partner with Hong Kong enterprises to enjoy these benefits.

5. For ECAI product suppliers, services providers or companies seeking overseas investment (eg, for infrastructure projects under Belt and Road), Hong Kong provides a full range of services to facilitate relevant deals. Hong Kong:
  - i. Serves as an integrator for infrastructure projects;
  - ii. Serves as an international logistics, maritime and aviation hub;
  - iii. Serves as an international trading hub;
  - iv. Provides financing, fundraising and investment-related services;
  - v. Help access to investors in Mainland China and other Asian companies, which are actively making investments overseas. (Thanks to Hong Kong's world-class services providers offering a range of investment-related services, Hong Kong channels about 60% of the mainland's outbound investment.);
  - vi. Provides technology research and commercialisation and IP trade-related services; and
  - vii. Provides dispute resolution and other professional services, such as accounting, auditing, due diligence, project management, etc.
  
6. For ECAI exporters and manufacturers, Hong Kong also serves as a show window and test market to consumers from Asia, as about 50 million visitors from Asia (including 43.8 million from the mainland and 3 million from South and Southeast Asia) visit Hong Kong annually. In addition, Hong Kong provides world-class trade-support services, including logistics, maritime and aviation services, branding, marketing and packaging services, etc. customised for Asian markets.

## **II) HKTDC Services**

The HKTDC helps ECAI companies make full use of the business advantages offered by Hong Kong:

1. The HKTDC connects ECAI companies with potential partners, investors, buyers, industry peers, etc, from Hong Kong, Mainland China (particularly the Greater Bay Area), ASEAN and other parts of Asia-Pacific.
  
2. The HKTDC provides ECAI companies with the latest market information about Mainland China – particularly the Greater Bay Area – ASEAN, other parts of Asia, and other Belt and Road markets. The information covers a wide range of sectors, including innovation and technology, creative industries, financial services, infrastructure development, logistics, maritime and aviation services, trade and professional services, etc.
  
3. We help ECAI start-ups do business in/with Hong Kong and/or the mainland, especially the Greater Bay Area, as well as the ASEAN region.

We do this through various channels:

**1. Conferences**

The HKTDC organises international conferences for companies from all over the world, including ECAI, to explore business opportunities, eg, Belt and Road Summit, Asian Financial Forum, Asian Logistics, Maritime and Aviation Forum, Business of IP Asia Forum, Asian E-tailing Summit, Asian Licensing Conference, “Think Asia, Think Hong Kong”, etc.

**2. Exhibitions**

The HKTDC organises more than 30 exhibitions, including some of the world’s largest marketplaces of their kind. Many of them are related to innovation & technology and creativity, eg, Electronics Fairs, International Medical and Healthcare Fair , Eco Expo Asia, International Film and TV Market (FILMART), International Licensing Show, DesignInspire, etc.

(Note: The 2020 editions of some HKTDC exhibitions have been rescheduled or reformatted as online events in view of the COVID-19 outbreak. Details: <https://home.hktdc.com/en/s/health-protection-measures>)

**3. Virtual exhibitions**

While some of our fairs have been rescheduled due to the COVID-19 outbreak, we continue to connect ECAI companies with potential business partners via online fairs, eg, quarterly virtual expos, Summer Sourcing Weeks | Go ONLINE, FILMART and CENTRESTAGE.

**4. Online sourcing**

The HKTDC's online sourcing service, including [hktdc.com Sourcing](https://www.hktdc.com/en/sourcing), the [Exhibition Online service](https://www.hktdc.com/en/exhibition-online-service) and [Marketplace App](https://www.hktdc.com/en/marketplace-app), features more than 2 million registered international buyers and 130,000 suppliers of products and services, mainly from Hong Kong, the mainland and other sourcing hubs in Asia.

**5. Business/deal matching services**

We offer a suite of integrated matching services dedicated to helping ECAI companies identify and screen potential Hong Kong business partners at HKTDC events, eg, AFF, Belt and Road Summit and trade fairs.

**6. Inbound and Outbound Business missions**

We bring mainland investors and Hong Kong services providers to the ECAI region to explore cooperation in such sectors as infrastructure and technology. We also bring ECAI companies to our fairs and conferences (eg, Belt and Road Summit) to explore business opportunities in Mainland China, ASEAN, and other markets.

(Note: We have rescheduled a number of missions since the COVID-19 outbreak. Details: <https://home.hktdc.com/en/s/health-protection-measures>)

## **7. Infrastructure and IP project databases**

Examples:

- Belt and Road Portal (<https://beltandroad.hktdc.com/>) listing available projects in Belt and Road countries
- Asia IP Exchange online platform ([http://www.asiaipex.com/Home/Index EN](http://www.asiaipex.com/Home/Index_EN)) listing tradable IP items

## **8. Product magazines and research reports**

Companies can gain market and product information and trends from our 20-plus product magazines and industry supplements (with 5 million readers worldwide), as well as from some 3,000 research articles we publish a year. These are available in print, online and via apps.

## **9. Start-up support**

We organise eight start-up zones at our trade fairs and conferences held in Hong Kong, helping start-ups from Hong Kong and ECAI connect with potential partners and investors from all over the world.

### **III) Most Recent Success Stories of ECAI Companies**

#### **Germany**

1. Germany's ALBA Group, one of the world's leading recycling and environmental services companies headquartered in Berlin, set up its Hong Kong office in the early 1990s. The office now serves as its Asian headquarters. In March 2018, the group launched in Hong Kong its most advanced facility in Asia -- the Hong Kong WEEE-PARK for processing and recycling waste, including electrical and electronic equipment. In September 2019, the group also announced the launch of its first recycling plant for processing polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and high-density polyethylene (HDPE) waste in Hong Kong, scheduled to be in full operation in December 2020. ALBA works with Hong Kong business partners, including major local recycling firm Baguio Waste Management & Recycling Limited, and Swire's Coca-Cola Limited. Through its Hong Kong office, ALBA is becoming increasingly active in recycling consultancy and related project management in Mainland China

## **Israel**

2. Israeli start-up PLAYWORK announced in February 2020 collaboration with Hong Kong-based company Health Link Holdings Limited, which would distribute the Israeli company's new exercise ball, PLAYBALL, to healthcare providers across Southeast Asia. Both companies see huge potential in Asia for the product. Developed by PLAYWORK, PLAYBALL is an intelligent rehabilitation and fitness product that allows patients to play interactive games while performing a variety of rehabilitative exercises. It tracks the user's performance and monitor their progress in recovery. Health Link is a supplier of innovative and high-tech medical, rehabilitation and sport science equipment.
3. Israel's Hear & Wear, offering hearing devices for people with mild to moderate hearing loss, entered the Hong Kong market through Safe Concept, a well-established Hong Kong distributor of e-health and safety products. Apart from distributing products for the Israeli company, Safe Concept also made referrals resulting from Hear & Wear's products available at local retail outlets such as EyeCare, LiveSmart and Fortress in Hong Kong. Hear & Wear connected with Safe Concept during a roadshow to Hong Kong organised by the Israeli Innovation Authority and the Israeli Consulate in Hong Kong.

## **Italy/UK**

4. Italian luxury fashion brand Golden Goose, widely recognised for its iconic sneakers, opened its first Hong Kong flagship store in August 2019. The store is the label's fourth worldwide (after Milan, Dubai and Tokyo) to introduce its new concept -- The LAB, which allows customers to witness how their sneakers are customised according to their preferences, and encourages them to give their sneakers a personal touch themselves by adding accessories. The store is located at the upmarket K11 MUSEA shopping arcade in the Tsim Sha Tsui tourist district. Hong Kong is part of the company's Asian expansion drive. Golden Goose's revenue in Asia, currently taking up more than 35% of global turnover, is expected to grow further thanks to increasing online sales and promotional activities. The company has operations in Europe, the US and Asia. Established in Venice, Italy, in 2000 by two young Venetian designers (Francesca Rinaldo and Alessandro Gallo), Golden Goose is currently controlled by UK-based global investment firm Permira.

## **Italy**

5. Italy's world-famous and popular football club Juventus officially inaugurated its Asian headquarters in Hong Kong in December 2019. The new Hong Kong branch will help expand the company's brand promotion and marketing in Asia. The club said the Hong Kong office would play a strategic role in helping it attract more Asian fans and win greater brand recognition in the long run. Juventus' summer tour was held in Asia last July, underscoring the importance of Asian markets to the club.

## **Russia**

6. Parkingbnb, a Russian start-up operating a mobile app that helps drivers find the cheapest and closest parking space, opened an office in Hong Kong in 2019, with support from various parties including the HKTDC. The company regarded setting up in Hong Kong as an important strategy in bringing its business in Asia-Pacific to the next level. It believes in Hong Kong's well-established technology ecosystem, strong government support for businesses and competitive tax regime. The company exhibited at the HKTDC SmartBiz Expo and attended the Asian E-tailing Summit in 2019. At these events, it established many useful business contacts, including the Russia-Hong Kong Business Association.

## **Spain**

7. A consortium comprising Spain's Acciona, Hong Kong's Jardine Engineering Corporation Limited and China State Construction Engineering (Hong Kong) Ltd won a contract from the Hong Kong Water Supply Department in December 2019 for the design, construction and operation of a new desalination plant. Valued about EUR1 billion, the project aims to provide an additional water resource during low rainfall seasons. The desalination plant is expected to commence operation in 2023 with a water production capacity of 135,000 cubic metres per day. The contractual operation period is ten years with a provision for extension by five years.
8. Spain's Jeanologia, one of the world's major providers of sustainable finishing and coding technologies for textiles, opened its Asian headquarters in Hong Kong in June 2020.
9. Spanish skincare brand BIMAIO entered the Hong Kong market by launching an online store targeting specifically the city's consumers earlier in 2020, marking the Asian foray of its parent company, Amifar Laboratorios, which carries seven skincare brands. The company sees Hong Kong a launch pad for its Asian expansion, and believes its experience in Hong Kong will provide the insights it needs for penetrating the wider Asian market. It regards Hong Kong as the leading market in Asia and the window for showcasing the latest vision and concepts in "well-being".
10. Bimba and Lola, a popular Spanish fashion brand with more than 280 stores in about 15 countries, opened its first store in Hong Kong in November 2019 and uses it to actively expand other market in Asia.

## **Turkey**

11. Begum Bridal Design House, a Turkish bridal wear designer label started selling bridal and evening gowns in Hong Kong through two local bridal boutiques, Designer Bridal Room and La Ceremonie Atelier, since December 2019.

## UK

12. Cleanship, a Glasgow-based company specialising in compliance services and technology for the shipping industry, set up an office in Hong Kong in 2019, believing the city is a vibrant and good shipping market offering plenty of business opportunities. The company also joined the Hong Kong Shipowners Association immediately after -- a move reflecting the importance it attaches to its Hong Kong business. The Hong Kong office helps the company develop local talent across Asia and supports its Mainland China offices in Shanghai, Nantong and Chengxi in Jiangsu. Cleanship says Hong Kong has “the best ecosystem” to help the company expand in global markets. It is looking to expand its engineering team in Hong Kong by the end of 2020.

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