

# BUSINESS

## OY Motion bets big on bionic hand exports

By **ZHOU WENTING** in Shanghai  
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Supported by homegrown sensors and artificial intelligence technologies, an entirely homemade bionic hand ready for mass production will reach overseas markets this year to benefit those who lost their hands, a senior company executive said.

The product can enable its user to move the 10 fingers and all of the joints and is able to conduct around 20 motions in accordance with its user's command, including grasping, holding, squeezing and eating with chopsticks, Ni Hualiang, founder and general manager of OY Motion, said during an exclusive interview with China Daily last week.

The first international recipients where the product will be exported are Turkey, Egypt and Russia.

"The main reason that we took those countries into consideration was that the disabled persons there encountered similar situations as their counterparts in China. There is a higher proportion of suffering from their disability but lower purchasing power. Many choose not to resort to an artificial limb. Our products may present a larger value in those markets," Ni said.

He said enterprises and industry associations in other countries and regions in South America, Africa and Europe had also approached the firm for the product.

Ni said the company established in Shanghai's Zhangjiang Hi-tech Park in 2015 had already reached strategic collaboration partnerships with a major component provider of artificial limbs in Turkey and a rehabilitation center for the disabled with artificial limbs in Egypt.

The two will help OY Motion to expand in local markets and they are responsible for sales and after-sales service.

The sales target in the three overseas markets totaled 300 to 500 this year and 3,000 next year, Ni said.

Technological indicators of the 700-gram product which has 280 components and multiple motors performed the same or even better than most advanced international industrial ver-

sions, the company said.

Compared with two similar products publicly recognized to represent the best industry standard internationally, the homegrown product is equipped with up to eight sensors while their competitors only have two.

The sensors obtain nerve signals in the skin when the brain sends an order for movement, Ni explained.

The AI system will study the signals to understand what kind of gesture the user wants to make and pass on the user's intention to the machine.

"Empowered by machine learning, the longer someone uses the bionic hand, the more precisely the machine will present the motion that the user wants and the collaboration between the person and the 'hand' will become smoother," said Ni.

Imported bionic hands are priced between 300,000 yuan (\$42,900) and 500,000 yuan each and few among the disabled can afford them, said Liu Jianhua, vice chairman of the Shanghai Foundation for Disabled Persons. The pricing of the domestic product at this time is around 100,000 yuan each.

There are more than 10 million people in China suffering from upper limb disabilities, data from the China Disabled Persons' Federation showed.

Zhang Yuecheng, 39, was born without a left hand and has used the bionic hand for four months. He said he can now open water bottles, shake hands with others and carry bags smoothly with it.

"More importantly, it helped shorten the psychological distance between me and others and filled me with confidence," the professional painter in Shanghai said.

Zhang explained he used to make most of the movements that other people make with their hands in his own way, like holding something under an arm or with the help of his chin. Now he can make such motions with "both hands" just like everyone else.

Ni said the product is expected to be used for service robots in the future so they will be able to open doors and fulfill more tasks in different scenarios.



A man uses his bionic hand to lift a bottle of water during a charity event held by OY Motion for the Shanghai Foundation for Disabled Persons on July 16. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

### RIGHT TRACK

## Zhejiang on steady path to recovery

By **MA ZHENHUAN** in Hangzhou  
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A powerhouse known for its booming private and export-oriented economy, East China's Zhejiang province has taken a combination of effective measures to offset the impact of COVID-19 on foreign trade and help foreign trade enterprises find a way out of business issues they have faced during the pandemic.

In early February, the province released a set of 30 policies in going all out to sustain economic development.

In the following months, policies supporting foreign trade companies and foreign investment were announced to withstand the negative economic impact caused by the spread of the disease worldwide.

Backed by the provincial government, cities in Zhejiang have striven to fully exert their local strengths and advantages to survive the lingering slowdown of foreign trade.

Zhejiang Lovely Technology Textile Co Ltd, a manufacturer of garments and protective clothes for medical uses in Shengzhou, a county-level city in Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, distributed its own orders of over

300,000 in clothing to companies within the city since March. The local textile and clothing association acted as the coordinator during the process.

Zhang Yuejin, director of the company's manufacturing department, said the need for protective clothes has surged since the beginning of the year and they decided to focus on making protective clothes. They have shared the orders of ordinary garments with local garment makers in Shengzhou.

Xing Yunming, director of the Shengzhou Mingli Garment Factory, said so far his company has manufactured about 50,000 garments for the orders shared by Zhejiang Lovely Technology Textile Co Ltd.

"Without these orders, the factory wouldn't survive the crisis," he said, adding the orders are key in their ability to retain their workers.

An official at Shengzhou's commerce bureau said the sharing of orders has partly solved the problems of companies that cannot receive any orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is considered conducive to the recovery of foreign trade in the city.

The port city of Ningbo in Zhejiang, which is ranked 5th in China in 2019 in terms of the value of

### SIX PRIORITIES



An employee inspects imported cars at Ningbo Zhoushan port in Zhejiang province in May. ZHANG YONGTAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

## China plans more tweaks in Customs procedures

### Norms improved to minimize and offset export-oriented firms' financial losses

By **ZHONG NAN**  
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The government will further improve efficiency of Customs clearance to solve the difficulties for both exporters and importers to remove their burdens and enhance their motivation and vitality, officials said on Wednesday.

To minimize and offset export-oriented firms' financial losses caused by COVID-19 and the world's weak demand for goods, Customs authorities have vigorously shortened the overall Customs clearance time for both imported and exported goods.

They have also promoted "advance declaration" to diversify their services, said Dang Yingjie, deputy director-general of the National Office of Port Administration at the General Administration of Customs.

In response to the global pandemic, she said the GAC has strengthened the monitoring of port clearance times to mitigate the impact of the contagion on the overall Customs clearance time.

Monitored by the GAC, the overall Customs clearance time for imports across the country was 39.66 hours in June, while the time for exports was 2.28 hours, a significant reduction of 59 percent and 81 percent respectively from 2017.

Customs will utilize the internet to ensure the stable and efficient operation of the information system, she added.

Dang said China will continue to

deepen its cooperation with related parties to promote the role of Authorized Economic Operator and other policy tools to boost trade activities between China and Europe via rail transport.

This will help companies resolve issues in both exports and imports, as well as encourage more companies from economies related to the Belt and Road Initiative to join the AEO certification program.

The program was advocated by the World Customs Organization to strengthen international supply chain security and facilitate the movement of legitimate goods.

Under the program, Customs from various regions form partnerships with industry to collaboratively reduce barriers to Customs procedures in order to enhance international trade efficiency.

Covering 48 countries and regions, China has signed most AEO agreements in the world to facilitate Customs clearance for companies.

Guiyang Customs district in Guizhou province introduced six policies in the region in the second quarter of this year to support the business growth of China Railway Express Co Ltd, a subsidiary of China State Railway Group Co Ltd, the nation's railroad operator.

The policies mainly support the construction of a logistics hub at Gaimao Railway Station in Guiyang, which is connected with the land-sea corridor in western China and the international combined trans-

portation corridor of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Gaimao Railway Station has established a bonded area based on market demand, and relies on the bonded area's policy advantages to boost trade activities for exporters in Guizhou.

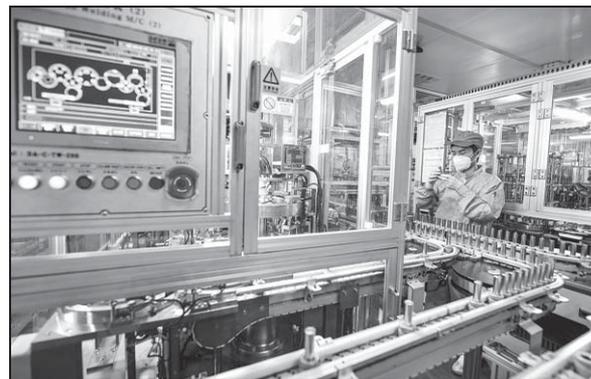
China's foreign trade declined 3.2 percent year-on-year to 14.24 trillion yuan (\$2.03 trillion) in the first half of 2020, with the rate of decline falling by 1.7 percentage points compared with the figure in the first five months of this year, according to Customs data.

Eager to restore and enrich the country's developing ability, the State Council issued a guideline on Tuesday to further improve the business environment and better serve market entities across the country.

The document stresses six categories of policies and measures. They include more streamlined and efficient approval procedures for construction projects and their financing, easier approval processes and conditions for enterprises generally, and an optimized business environment for foreign trade and investment.

It also highlights support for employment and entrepreneurship, improved quality and efficiency of services provided to businesses, and a long-term mechanism for business environment improvement.

Yang Hongcan, head of the business registration bureau at the State Administration for Market Regulation, said the administration will take specific measures in the next step to further lower the market-entry threshold for the education, medical services and sports sectors. All unreasonable barriers will be removed.



An employee inspects battery products at a factory in Huzhou, Zhejiang province, on Monday. TAN YUNFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

cent. The city's export value reached 58.66 billion yuan, up by 23.4 percent compared to the previous year. That is also 19.1 percentage points higher than that of the whole country.

In Huzhou in northern Zhejiang, small and medium-sized companies in Anji county have been focusing on the development of cross-border e-commerce in the hope of finding a new growth engine for its traditional foreign trade sector.

To help them lower the financing costs and the risks of using overseas warehouse facilities, the county's foreign trade service platform coordinated domestic and foreign

resources and launched an exclusive service for foreign trade companies.

The platform announced it would pay for goods in advance of the completion of the transaction in a bid to protect small companies from the burden of payment collection.

Customs statistics show that between January and June, volume for foreign trade in goods in Zhejiang reached 1.47 trillion yuan, a year-on-year rise of 4.2 percent, 7.4 percentage points higher than the national average, Zhejiang's Department of Commerce said on Tuesday.

Qin Jirong contributed to this story.

## Ikea City to target younger customers

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**  
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Ikea, a world's leading home furnishings retailer, opened its first Ikea City in central Shanghai on Thursday to get closer to Chinese consumers, especially the younger generation, to enhance its omni-channel retailing experience through store designs, digital innovations and catering elements.

The move implements Ikea China's transformation strategy that is centered on digitalization and localization it has adopted since last August.

Ikea City, which stands in the Jing'an district of Shanghai, has a usable floor area of 3,000 square meters. The three-floor mall has 3,500 items on display, of which about 1,200 items are available to take home right away. Consumers can have access to a total of 9,500 items by clicking on its online platforms and get their orders home delivered.

Ikea City Market Manager Zhu Yuan said the store offers a retailing experience with more convenience, flexibility and diversity to consumers by blending with Shanghai's urban characteristics along with omni-channel services.

"The store shows Ikea's efforts to better meet the needs of consumers and keep pace with the upgraded sales pattern in China by adding more retail pathways both online and offline," said Francois Brenti, vice-president of Ikea China.

As a retailer which once mostly operated brick-and-mortar malls, Ikea China carried out its transformation strategy with the aim of boosting convenience and accessibility for consumers. It developed smaller-sized stores in downtown areas to accelerate its omni-channel retailing, Brenti said.

"Ikea has been in China for 22 years and is going to be here for longer," said Brenti. "China is one of the most important markets for Ikea. We are willing to launch new formats to correspond to the needs of consumers who shop at different time and occasions."

Brenti said the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their brick-and-mortar stores in China, but their online businesses have seen significant growth.

"We are on a faster track than we expected. It has not put any question mark to our business so far," he said. "Through this pandemic, we understand consumers in China want more conveniences."

Ikea's omni-channels composed of brick-and-mortar stores, mini-WeChat program, applications and websites, and the online store at Tmall are complementary to each other and able to take fast action according to consumer demand, Brenti said.

Jason Yu, general manager of Kantar Worldpanel China, said the move is a radical transformation of Ikea. The retailer has been known for locating majority of its stores in suburban areas in order to display its merchandise in as many places as possible.

Large stores located out of the center of town would mean limited shopping frequencies unless it is a destination shopping for consumers, said Yu.

He said it is essential for furniture retailers to offer a brick-and-mortar shopping experience which will enable consumers to see how products can be used in real life situations. They can then choose to order from the online store or from inventory in stores so they can enjoy the convenience of home delivery.

Ikea opened its online flagship store on Alibaba's e-commerce platform Tmall in March, providing about 3,800 Ikea products. The number is about 40 percent of all products that Ikea provides in a physical store.

The Ingka Group, which owns most Ikea furniture stores worldwide, now has 30 Ikea retail outlets, one Ikea City, two experience shops and three Livat shopping centers in China.