

Industry clusters power province's progress

GD TODAY

High-quality growth emphasized as key to achievements across Greater Bay Area

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After the automotive industry became Guangdong's eighth industrial cluster that is capable of generating at least 1 trillion yuan (\$137.97 billion) in annual operating revenue in 2023, the South China province saw new energy emerge as the ninth one last year, according to a senior official.

Huang Kunming, Party secretary of Guangdong, highlighted these developments during the open day of the Guangdong delegation at this year's two sessions — the gatherings of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which are significant political events that shape the country's policy direction.

The open day event, held on Thursday, attracted 267 journalists from 107 domestic and foreign media outlets.

According to official data, Guangdong's new energy industry cluster achieved an operating revenue of 1.1 trillion yuan last year.

In addition to the automotive and new energy sectors, Guangdong boasts seven other 1-trillion-yuan industrial clusters. They are next-generation electronic information, green petrochemicals, smart home appliances, advanced materials, modern light industry and textiles, software and information services, modern agriculture and food.

Huang highlighted Guangdong's pragmatic approach to building a modern industrial system, focusing



Nearly 270 journalists from 107 domestic and international media outlets attend the open day event hosted by the Guangdong delegation to the third annual session of the 14th National People's Congress in Beijing on Thursday afternoon. ZHANG ZIWANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

on industrial and agricultural production and promoting high-quality development.

The province remains committed to developing the real economy with manufacturing at its core, emphasizing integrated development, open collaboration, and policy optimization to accelerate the construction of a modern industrial system with local characteristics and advantages.

When discussing innovation and supporting advantages for the construction of a modern industrial system, Huang mentioned that the country has established key national laboratories and facilities in Guangdong, such as Pengcheng and Guangzhou laboratories, China Spallation Neutron Source, and



The Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin serves as a vital platform to promote moderate economic diversification in the Macao Special Administrative Region. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Jiangmen Underground Neutrino Observatory.

Also, Guangdong has various pro-

fessional divisions and application scenarios, allowing good results and ideas to quickly transform into good

products and services, Huang noted.

This year, Guangdong plans to launch a talent recruitment plan, aiming to attract 1 million college graduates to work and start businesses in the province. It also welcomes entrepreneurs to invest and develop their ventures.

Regarding the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Wang Weizhong, governor of Guangdong, affirmed the province's commitment to collaborating with the two special administrative regions to build a world-class Bay Area.

Specific measures include enhancing mechanism alignment in personnel exchanges, traffic, capital and data flows, and government

services to boost market integration within the Bay Area.

Additionally, efforts will focus on making the Bay Area a demonstration zone for high-quality development, with technological innovation driving the development of new quality productive forces.

Joint scientific research efforts among the three regions will be intensified, particularly in emerging industries such as artificial intelligence, robotics, autonomous driving, the low-altitude economy, biomanufacturing, quantum technology, and commercial aerospace.

To further promote cooperation and integration, new Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao joint laboratories will be established this year, and provincial-level key research plans and major basic research projects will remain open to Hong Kong and Macao.

Since its launch in 2019, the Bay Area has already made significant economic contributions, creating one-ninth of the country's economic aggregate with less than 1 percent of the national land area and 6 percent of the population. Its economic aggregate reached 14.5 trillion yuan in 2024, an increase of 3.7 trillion yuan compared to 2018.

Hengqin in Guangdong province has played a crucial role in promoting the diversified development of Macao's economy. For over 15 years, Hengqin's GDP has grown significantly, surging from 285 million yuan to 53.8 billion yuan, an average annual growth rate of 27.4 percent.

Investing in the Greater Bay Area aligns with the national strategy, offering a gateway to the future, Wang said. Late this year, the 15th National Games and the National Paralympic Games will be jointly hosted by Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao for the first time. Wang warmly welcomes people to experience the dynamic transformations taking place in the Bay Area and the province.

Guangdong's efforts fueling widespread innovation

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Renowned automaker BYD, headquartered in South China's Guangdong province, recently announced the achievement of becoming sales champion in three categories based on 2024 sales data — leading China's automotive market in both corporate and brand sales, and topping the global new energy vehicle market.

This remarkable success highlights BYD's continuous innovation and growth, exemplified by the production of its first new energy vehicle to its 10 millionth within a span of 16 years.

Guangdong has become a hotbed for groundbreaking technological advancements and industrial achievements. Companies including Huawei, which launched its terminal operating system Harmony OS in just 10 years, and EHang, which won the world's first certificate as a pilotless passenger-carrying electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft manufacturer, showcase the province's prowess in innovation and cutting-edge technology.

The province's commitment to research and development is evident in its substantial R&D expenditure, which reached approximately 510 billion yuan (\$70.3 billion) in 2024, according to this year's Guangdong provincial government work report.

Last year, Guangdong was home to about 77,000 high-tech enterprises and maintained its position as the

77,000
high-tech firms

operated in Guangdong in 2024

44
percent

of China's industrial robot output was from Guangdong

93,200
invention patents

were granted to Guangdong's strategic industry clusters during the first 10 months of 2024

top region for innovation capability in China for eight consecutive years. The Shenzhen-Hong Kong-Guangzhou sci-tech cluster's innovation index has consistently ranked second globally for five years, underscoring the region's commitment to fostering a culture of innovation.

In recent years, Guangdong has witnessed significant growth in key industries. The output of new energy vehicles, for example, grew by 43 percent last year, accounting for a quarter of the national total, and industrial robot output increased by 31.2 percent, making up 44 percent of the national total.

Guangdong is striding toward becoming a globally influential industrial technology innovation center. Han Enhou, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engi-

neering and president of the Guangdong Institute of Corrosion Science and Technology, said that achieving sci-tech outcome transformation and industrialization in Guangdong "is becoming a natural choice."

According to the Guangdong Department of Science and Technology, the amount of registered technology contracts has witnessed a significant rise over the past years, surging from over 340 billion yuan in 2020 to over 440 billion yuan in 2023.

In the first 10 months of 2024, the authorized invention patents of Guangdong's strategic industry clusters reached 93,200, continuing to lead the nation with a 24.75 percent year-on-year increase.

These clusters include intelligent connected and new energy vehicles, ultra-high-definition and new displays, intelligent equipment and robotics, low-altitude economy and aerospace, biomanufacturing, fashion consumer goods, and ship and marine engineering.

Guo Wanda, the executive deputy president of the China Development Institute (Shenzhen), emphasized the pivotal role of Guangdong's robust manufacturing foundation and dynamic ecosystem in driving the integration of technology and industrial innovation.

He highlighted the province's strengths in manufacturing, encompassing a strong capability, diverse categories, talent concentration, and comprehensive support systems, all of which serve as significant advantages fueling innovation.

In October last year, Guangdong

took a significant step by implementing a regulation aimed at promoting scientific and technological innovation, underlining the importance of safeguarding innovation through legislation and supporting the industrialization of science and technology.

In response to the surge of emerging industries, the province is actively advancing comprehensive technological innovation, large-scale application, and industrial development.

In the AI sector, Guangdong has achieved notable breakthroughs in critical areas such as chips, underlying frameworks, unmanned systems, and humanoid robots. It is facilitating the widespread adoption of general and vertical models across various sectors including industry, transportation, education, and healthcare.

In the new energy vehicle industry, the province is concentrating on key components, critical materials, automotive chips, and other essential aspects, mastering core technologies in batteries, motors, electronic control, autonomous driving, and vehicle-grid collaboration.

Wang Yueqin, director of the Guangdong Department of Science and Technology, said that the province is accelerating the construction of a comprehensive innovation chain, striving to become a globally influential industrial technology innovation hub.

She noted that Guangdong will continue promoting breakthroughs in key core technologies, with a specific focus on areas such as the low-altitude economy, AI, new materials, high-end equipment, and biomedicine.

Furthermore, the province will enhance basic and frontier technological research, allocate one-third of the sci-tech funds toward basic and applied research, and achieve breakthroughs in frontier technologies including quantum technology, brain-computer interfaces, high-end scientific instruments, embodied intelligence, and 6G communication technology.



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What they say

The Guangdong delegation to the ongoing National People's Congress held an open day event on Thursday afternoon, when NPC deputies from the province's political and business communities shared their insights with the media.

This year, Guangdong will put emphasis on promoting emerging industries such as integrated circuits, new energy vehicles, the low-altitude economy and commercial spaceflight. The province will place particular focus on cultivating future industries, such as biomanufacturing, quantum technology, embodied intelligence, and 6G. Additionally, Guangdong will vigorously implement the "Artificial Intelligence Plus" initiative, aiming to stay ahead of the curve and position itself better to accelerate development, especially in the fields of artificial intelligence and robotics.

Zhang Hu, executive vice-governor of Guangdong

We will focus on developing 15 strategic industry clusters with Guangzhou's characteristic advantages, six future industries and eight modern service industries, to develop Guangzhou into a key stronghold for new quality productive forces. Guangzhou will concentrate on platform construction, creating industrial bases that cover a combined area of 667 hectares and generate a total of at least 100 billion yuan (\$13.79 billion) in output value. Other efforts include accelerating the development of key areas such as Nansha, the city's eastern center and northern growth area, and national-level economic development zones. We will build a batch of leading industrial parks, promote the formation of industry clusters, and enhance the quality and efficiency of the parks, providing strong support for advancing high-quality development and modernization.

Guo Yonghang, Guangzhou's Party secretary

Shenzhen will lead industrial upgrading through technological innovation, enhancing 20 strategic emerging industrial clusters and eight future industries. The city will actively invest in new sectors such as artificial intelligence, robotics, the low-altitude economy and space technologies, aiming to gain the upper hand in the global technological and industrial landscape. Shenzhen will continue to perfect the new-type holistic nationwide resources-mobilizing system, advance the construction of major innovation platforms such as the Greater Bay

Area National Center of Technology Innovation and Pengcheng Laboratory, and create a world-class technological innovation ecosystem and talent development environment. This is all conducive to Shenzhen's goal of becoming a globally influential industrial and technological innovation center.

Qin Weizhong, Shenzhen mayor

Guangdong has vigorously fostered the marine industry in recent years, propelling the marine economy into the fast lane. The province's marine GDP surpassed 2 trillion yuan (\$275.86 billion) in 2024, maintaining its leading position in the country for 30 consecutive years, and accounting for about one-fifth of the national total. We will continue to advance the development of Guangzhou as a capital of marine innovation and Shenzhen as a global marine center city. We will also support cities including Zhuhai, Shantou and Zhanjiang to leverage their strengths to build distinctive modern sponge cities.

Ai Xuefeng, head of the Guangdong Provincial Development and Reform Commission

In an industry-based development approach, Maoming is accelerating the high-quality development program for Guangdong counties, towns and villages. The city was rated as excellent in an evaluation by the provincial government last May. In 2024, Maoming's urbanization rate of the permanent population increased by 3 percentage points over 2021. By industrializing agriculture, Maoming established 10 agricultural industry clusters in 2024, each capable of generating at least 10 billion yuan (\$1.38 billion) in annual operating revenue. The total value of the whole industry chains involving lychee, longan, agarwood, *huajuhong* (*Tomentose pumelo peel*), Sanhua plum, and tilapia exceeded 55 billion yuan last year.

Wang Xiongfei, Maoming mayor

As a powerhouse of intelligent connected vehicles and one of the first movers in the low-altitude economy, Guangdong has strategic advantages and a solid industrial foundation for developing the flying vehicle industry. It is time to seize the momentum and accelerate integrated development. We hope government departments can implement strategies combining institutional innovation, industrial ecosystem, and scenario-driven applications to promote the integrated development of flying vehicles and intelligent connected vehicles.

Feng Xingya, chairman of GAC Group



An EH216-S autonomous aerial vehicle, developed by EHang, a tech company headquartered in Guangdong province, performs a flight demonstration in Guangzhou on Feb 16. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY