

LCQ14: Promoting synergistic development of Shenzhen and Hong Kong in science and technology innovation

Following is a question by the Hon Martin Liao and a written reply by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, in the Legislative Council today (November 1):

Question:

The Development Plan for Shenzhen Park of Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone (the Plan) published by the State Council proposes to adhere to the synergistic development of the Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Zone and the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park, with an objective of basically establishing a highly efficient Shenzhen-Hong Kong science and technology innovation synergistic mechanism by 2025. In addition, it is learnt that the first batch of innovation and technology institutions have set up their operations in the Hong Kong Science Park Shenzhen Branch. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that as the Plan permits cross-boundary remittance of scientific research capital to fund scientific research projects in Shenzhen and Hong Kong, whether the Government has compiled statistics on the amount of scientific research capital granted by Mainland authorities and remitted to Hong Kong, as well as the details of the approved projects, including the number of such projects, the technology fields involved, the national projects undertaken and the research achievements, etc, as at the end of last month; if so, of the details;

(2) whether the Government knows the details of attracting strategic enterprises by the Hong Kong Science Park Shenzhen Branch, including the number, fields of development and operational status, etc, of such enterprises; and

(3) as regards the formulation of a unified scientific research and capital management system to realise the synergistic development of Shenzhen and Hong Kong in science and technology innovation, whether the Government has looked into the difficulties and pain points in establishing such system; if so, of the details; of the progress of establishing such system?

Reply:

President:

The "Outline of the 14th Five Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035" has indicated clear support for Hong Kong's

development into an international innovation and technology (I&T) centre, and included the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Loop as one of the four major platforms of co-operation in the Greater Bay Area (GBA). The Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone (Co-operation Zone) located at the two sides of Shenzhen River is developed under the "one river, two banks" and "one zone, two parks" vision. It consists of the Shenzhen Park of about 300 hectares, and the Hong Kong Park (i.e. Hong Kong-Shenzhen I&T Park, or HSITP) of 87 hectares.

In August this year, the Central Government promulgated the Development Plan for Shenzhen Park of Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone (Development Plan for Shenzhen Park) which sets out the development positioning of the Shenzhen Park. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government will render its full support and work with the Shenzhen Municipal Government to foster the synergistic development of the Hong Kong Park and the Shenzhen Park and explore innovative measures.

Having consulted the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the reply to various parts of the question raised by the Hon Martin Liao is as follows:

(1) and (3) Since 2019, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the National Natural Science Foundation of China and some Mainland provinces and cities have successively opened their science and technology schemes to Hong Kong's universities and research and development (R&D) institutions to apply as leading units or co-operative units. As at end of June 2023, Mainland central ministries as well as provinces and cities have approved cross-boundary R&D funding of about RMB 800 million for universities and R&D institutions in Hong Kong, covering about 530 projects on various technical areas, including life and health technology, artificial intelligence and data science, semiconductor, advanced manufacturing and new energy technology, etc.

The Development Plan for Shenzhen Park proposes the establishment of a scientific research management system that will fully align with that in Hong Kong and internationally. In this regard, the Government of the HKSAR and the Guangdong Provincial Government launched the "Guangdong-Hong Kong Technology Cooperation Funding Scheme" in 2004 to encourage co-operation between universities, research institutions and technology enterprises in Guangdong and Hong Kong, and promote work on high technology and the transformation of scientific and technological achievements, with a view to enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of enterprises in both places. The Shenzhen Municipal Government joined the scheme the following year. Under the funding scheme, the two sides will solicit proposals for Guangdong/Hong Kong and Shenzhen/Hong Kong R&D co-operation projects in technology areas of mutual interest to both sides, including a number of topics that cater to the latest technology trends and industrial development needs of the two places, and provide joint funding support for projects mutually supported by the two sides. As at end of June 2023, 210 projects have been mutually supported by both sides.

On the aforementioned basis of co-operation, the HKSAR Government will

continue to share its experience in scientific research management with central ministries and relevant units in Guangdong Province and Shenzhen Municipality, with a view to facilitating cross-boundary capital flow within the Co-operation Zone, and strengthening the alignment of I&T development planning, thereby promoting the sustainable development of I&T co-operation between the two places, enabling the Co-operation Zone to become a world-class innovation platform and contributing to the development of an international I&T centre in the GBA.

(2) The Shenzhen Branch of the Hong Kong Science Park (HKSP) aims to enable organisations and enterprises interested in conducting scientific research and business in the GBA to establish a presence in the Shenzhen Park of the Co-operation Zone before the completion of the first batch of the HSITP. Since June 2023, the first batch of tenants of the HKSP Shenzhen Branch started to move in. As at September 2023, a total of 18 enterprises and R&D centres have been admitted to the HKSP Shenzhen Branch in areas such as microelectronics, medical technology, big data and artificial intelligence, financial technology, robotics, and sustainable solutions. With the support of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, two of these enterprises have successfully applied for funding support from the Mainland municipal governments, while another 10 are actively raising funds to facilitate their business development, enabling them to expand into the GBA and Mainland markets.