

# LCQ7: China's Standards and GBA Standards

Following is a question by the Hon Yung Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, in the Legislative Council today (December 11):

Question:

It is learnt that the Governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao have been proactively developing the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Standards (GBA Standards) for different products or services in recent years, and a total of over 200 items have been announced to date. Meanwhile, many Belt and Road countries are gradually adopting the National Standards of the People's Republic of China (China's Standards). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has compiled statistics on the number of government departments and enterprises which have currently adopted the GBA Standards and China's Standards, as well as collated information on the details of the standards adopted by such departments and enterprises; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether it has plans to develop the GBA Standards in more fields; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (3) of the number and contents of the relevant publicity activities organised by the Government since the announcement of the first batch of the GBA Standards; and
- (4) whether the Government has plans to further promote the GBA Standards and China's Standards in Hong Kong, so as to encourage adoption by more enterprises; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

To grasp the development opportunities brought about by the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao are dedicated to formulating the GBA Standards of various products and services for relevant trades to adopt on a voluntary basis, with a view to improving product and service quality, promoting the interconnectivity and integrated development of the three places, as well as deepening Hong Kong's economic and trade exchanges and co-operation with the Mainland and Macao. As for the mandatory national standards of the Mainland, or Guobiao, products falling short of which shall not be produced, sold, imported into or supplied on the Mainland.

Having consulted the Development Bureau, the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau and the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the consolidated reply to the four parts of the question is as follows:

#### GBA Standards

The governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao signed a Memorandum of Understanding on jointly promoting the development of GBA Standards on April 24, 2023, and promulgated the first batch of a total of 110 GBA Standards. To date, a total of 215 GBA Standards have been developed and promulgated, including 32 most recently developed and promulgated on July 31, 2024. The 215 GBA Standards cover items in the fields of food quality and safety, Cantonese cuisine, prepared dishes, transportation, mechanical and electrical products, as well as medical care, nursing care, education, e-sports and environmental, social and governance, etc. According to the statistics of the Standardization Research Center for the GBA, more than 1 000 enterprises, organisations or entities in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao have declared the adoption of one or more GBA Standards, including more than 130 Hong Kong enterprises, organisations or units. The Government will continue to maintain contact with the Guangdong authorities on the extent of utilisation of the GBA Standards.

At the same time, the Government will continue to liaise and co-operate with the Guangdong and Macao authorities to promote the expansion of the list of the GBA Standards to cover more products and services in different fields. The development of the GBA Standards involves many sectors, as well as relevant technical and professional knowledge. Relevant trade associations, enterprises or organisations of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao are welcome to jointly draw up the GBA Standards and submit applications to the Standardization Research Center for the GBA.

The Trade and Industry Department (TID) has been coordinating the participation of relevant Government bureaux and departments in the work on the GBA Standards and, at the same time, invites them to encourage relevant organisations and enterprises to participate in the formulation and use of the GBA Standards. Since the promulgation of the first batch of the GBA Standards, the TID has held or attended four briefings and meetings to introduce and promote the use of GBA Standards to major industrial and trade organisations (ITOs) and the Small and Medium Enterprises Committee, and to encourage the trade's active participation in the formulation of GBA Standards. At the meetings and exchanges with individual ITOs, the TID also invites them to encourage their member enterprises to actively participate in the formulation and use of the GBA Standards in accordance with market situation and needs, with a view to helping promote their products and services in the GBA. In addition, the TID issues Commercial Information Circulars to provide the trade with information on the GBA Standards.

Other bureaux and departments also actively participate in the promotion of the GBA Standards. For example, the Development Bureau is collaborating

with the Guangdong Province and the Macao Special Administrative Region to formulate the GBA Standards on the skill levels of skilled workers and technicians in the construction sector, and will take forward the "One Examination, Multiple Certification" arrangement. The purpose of formulating the GBA Standards is to enhance the quality of construction training in the GBA. Hence, the GBA Standards will be established based on the principle of "adopting the higher standards, and covering more elements", so as to follow the higher standards among the three places and cover the key elements in the individual syllabuses of the three places. Those who pass the examinations adopting the GBA Standards can concurrently obtain vocational skill certificates issued by the three places. This will contribute to the nurturing of construction talents in the GBA. We aim to announce the GBA Standards and take forward the "One Examination, Multiple Certification" arrangement for the first pilot trade by the first quarter of 2025. The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has also set up a dedicated webpage on the GBA Standards for food with a view to explaining the relevant details to, and consolidating useful references for, the trade. In the meantime, the CFS has also been promoting the adoption of the GBA Standards via the regular communications or meetings with the trade and stakeholders.

The TID will continue to invite bureaux and departments to promote the use of the GBA Standards in their policy areas, including engaging relevant government agencies of Guangdong and Macao to jointly consider promoting the formulation and application of the GBA Standards in businesses involving Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, with a view to bringing facilitation and other specific benefits to the trade, thereby encouraging their use of the GBA Standards.

## Guobiao

The Government has not compiled statistics on the number of government departments and/or enterprises which have currently adopted Guobiao in its policy/business areas.

As regards the introduction of vehicle brands and models from the Mainland, the Transport Department (TD) has been accepting submissions of Guobiao from the trade to substantiate that the vehicles or their components comply with the objective vehicle construction standards stipulated in the legislation. The TD has also been regularly reviewing existing laws and guidelines in response to relevant vehicle standards on the Mainland and in different regions. When amending related legislation, the TD would suitably include Guobiao as one of the approved specifications in vehicle construction standards. As of end October 2024, the TD has approved 144 electric vehicle models from the Mainland.

Besides, the CFS will take into account the latest development of relevant food regulations, including the standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and relevant food safety standards of major sources of import (e.g. Guobiao), and consider local food consumption pattern, dietary practices, results of risk assessments and stakeholders' concerns, in

formulating and updating local food safety standards.

As regards building standards, the Development Bureau will review and enhance Hong Kong's building standards, which have been in place for many years, through the Building Technology Research Institute by making reference to overseas building standards and Guobiao, with a view to promoting local application of high-quality and cost-effective construction materials from the Mainland and overseas. At the same time, the Development Bureau will also closely liaise with its counterparts in the Guangdong Province to take forward the formulation of the GBA Construction Standards.