

S for IT visits MARS Centre (with photos)

The Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit, together with the Commissioner for Innovation and Technology, Ms Rebecca Pun, inspected the MARS Centre at Tai Po InnoPark today (May 5). They visited three enterprises located in the MARS Centre to learn about how the integration of advanced manufacturing and scientific research capabilities speeds up local research and development (R&D) and the manufacturing process, thereby increasing the local supplies of personal protection equipment and medical diagnostic systems. These products all require very high standards of precision, hygiene procedures and quality at different stages of the production cycle.

The visit was conducted in the company of the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, Dr Sunny Chai. The three enterprises focus on developing next generation magnetic resonance imaging, innovative and automated multiple point-of-care diagnostic systems for detecting infectious respiratory diseases and the manufacture of face masks respectively. Two of them have received support from funding programmes administered by the Innovation and Technology Commission in different stages of development, including the Innovation and Technology Support Programme and the Public Sector Trial Scheme, which help turn their R&D outcomes into products and start their production lines in Hong Kong.

Mr Sit said, "In view of the surging demand for anti-epidemic items under the epidemic, we have refurbished an industrial building at Tai Po InnoPark as the MARS Centre to offer a high-specification fully-serviced production base for medical supplies, with a view to allowing Hong Kong to leverage its strengths in life and health sciences. It also accelerates local R&D and the production process, promotes commercialisation of R&D results, and responds positively to the needs of the community by offering medical supplies to meet local demands at critical times.

"The positive response from the industry to the high-specification industrial facilities affirms the directions in the setting up of high value-added and technology-intensive manufacturing processes and production lines in Hong Kong, and supports industry with innovation and technology (I&T). Commissioned in late 2021, the MARS Centre has a high occupancy rate of 96 per cent. Ten local and international enterprises focusing on medical goods and production of relevant products and services are expected to move in by the middle of this year. It is conducive to driving re-industrialisation with I&T and assist in the anti-epidemic work in Hong Kong."

Several new infrastructures driving re-industrialisation have been completed in recent years. The MARS Centre is one of them, along with the Data Technology Hub and the Advanced Manufacturing Centre located in Tseung Kwan O InnoPark. The construction of the Microelectronics Centre in Yuen Long InnoPark is also in progress and is expected to commence operation in 2024.

It will provide essential infrastructure to support the development and pilot production/manufacturing of microelectronics products and attract enterprises that produce microelectronics products and related industries, which helps promote the development of high value-added industries. In view of the enthusiastic response from the industry to the new infrastructures, the HKSTPC has started to plan for the construction of a second Advanced Manufacturing Centre to further support the development of re-industrialisation in Hong Kong.

Mr Sit added, "The Government is committed to promoting re-industrialisation and fostering I&T application and smart production in recent years to attract more high value-added and technology-intensive manufacturing processes and production lines to set up operations in Hong Kong to enhance the I&T ecosystem. This can open up new industries, drive the transformation of the economy and enhance competitiveness, thereby developing a stronger I&T platform and contributing to Hong Kong's development into an international I&T hub."

