

Editor's note: Hong Kong is pressing ahead with high-quality economic development. The city is getting ready for growth in key industries such as intellectual property trading and innovation and technology. It will also promote aviation development to enhance its status as an international aviation hub.



Experts: HK well poised to cash in on IP trading

The Business of IP Asia Forum, organized by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, and the Hong Kong Design Centre on Dec 1-2, 2022, brings together professionals and business leaders worldwide to explore the latest developments in intellectual property and business opportunities. ANDY CHONG / CHINA DAILY

Special Administrative Region has the legal framework and expertise to support transactions

By GANG WEN in Hong Kong

Major players in Hong Kong's intellectual property field are painting a rosy picture of the city becoming a regional IP trading center by unleashing its huge potential for IP creation and commercialization with its strong IP protection regime, a robust legal system and highly developed service industries.

The goal of developing Hong Kong into a regional IP trading center as set out in the nation's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) is a recognition of the city's IP strengths and talents. In particular, the ongoing enhancement of its IP protection regime, such as the implementation of an original grant patent system and recent updates of its copyright law, coupled with its large pool of multi-lingual professionals with Chinese mainland and overseas perspectives, help to facilitate IP trading.

Hong Kong ranks 10th globally in the intellectual property rights category of the 2022 World Competitiveness Yearbook published by the International Institute for Management Development in Switzerland. The city was also among the world's top 20 patent offices for filings in 2021, according to an annual report released by the World Intellectual Property Organization.

As an outstanding provider of professional services, Hong Kong has a wealth of legal and professional expertise in different areas covering IP, commerce and finance, accountancy, dispute resolution, to support IP trading activities at home and abroad.

James Choi Chi-kit, a local solicitor and council member of the Licensing Executives Society China - Hong Kong Sub-chapter, said that Hong Kong's strength in IP trading lies in its legal professionals' comprehen-

sive understanding of the Chinese mainland and international legal systems, as well as their extensive experience in handling cross-border IP disputes.

Choi's law firm helped a mainland catering company, which was embroiled in a trademark dispute in Europe. It was a difficult battle, he said, as it involved a foreign legal system, and the catering company's first attempt to win the case failed. It later turned to Choi's firm and managed to settle the cross-border IP dispute with the assistance of Hong Kong professionals experienced in dealing with foreign legal systems.

"Senior IP lawyers in Hong Kong, for instance, may be able to better predict the strategies their foreign rivals might adopt, or what kind of legal opinions foreign judiciaries would hold over the disputes," Choi said.

The Business of Intellectual Property Asia Forum, or BIP Asia, co-organized by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and the Hong Kong Design Centre, is an annual flagship event in the Asia-Pacific region. BIP Asia gathers professionals and business leaders from all over the world to discuss the latest developments in the IP world and explore business collaboration opportunities. In 2022, the forum was held in a hybrid format - in person and online, featuring over 70 prominent speakers and attracting more than 14,000 participants.

To keep up with the times and assist parties to locate particular IP that is of interest to them, Asia IP Exchange, a free online platform and database, has been launched by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council. It helps to connect IP own-

ers and potential buyers. At present, the platform showcases over 28,000 tradeable IP listings from around the world. It also cooperates with local research and development institutions as well as partners outside of Hong Kong to expand its IP database.

The city launched an original grant patents system in 2019 to provide a direct route for innovators to seek standard patent protection in Hong Kong for up to 20 years. This helps to promote innovation and commercialization of R&D outcomes as innovators can now apply for and register patents in Hong Kong without needing to go through other patent offices outside Hong Kong.

To further facilitate cross-boundary protection of patents, the China National Intellectual Property Administration, in collaboration with IP authorities in Hong Kong and Guangdong province, launched a pilot project in January 2023 to offer Hong Kong applicants prioritized examination of their qualified invention patent applications in the mainland. This pilot project will facilitate Hong Kong applicants in seeking patent protection in the mainland to safeguard the exploitation and commercialization of their inventions, contributing to the development of innovation and technology in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong can serve as a gateway for inventors and content providers in the mainland to promote their products globally, thereby increasing the value of their IPs. This has long been a case in point for the movie industry, said Sobel Chan Ka-lok, senior lecturer at the School of Communication of the Hang Seng University of Hong Kong.

A good example is *Operation Red Sea*, a 2018 movie directed by Hong Kong director Dante Lam Chiu-yin, starring mainland actors such as Zhang Yi and Huang Jingyu. The blockbuster has earned more than 3.6 billion yuan (\$504.94 million),

ranking among the 10 highest-grossing titles in the history of the mainland's movie industry. Pocketing an array of awards, it was also selected to represent Hong Kong for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 91st Academy Awards.

The success of mainland-Hong Kong co-production films over the past decades is a testimony to the city's role in promoting the commercialization of mainland IP products, Chan added.

Looking forward, Choi is placing his bets on the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area - an 11-city world-leading bay area in the making - to generate a surge in demand for Hong Kong's IP professional services. "I have seen more clients from the mainland and overseas, especially those from Asian countries, who are now willing to seek legal advice on IP registration, protection and trading," Choi said.

The Copyright (Amendment) Ordinance 2022, effective from May 1, 2023, will further strengthen copyright protection in the digital environment. The new legislation has introduced an exclusive technology-neutral communication right for copyright owners, a "safe harbour" regime for incentivizing online service providers to cooperate with copyright owners in combating online piracy, and several new copyright exceptions that allow the use of copyright works in some common internet activities and facilitate online learning.

As Hong Kong continues to improve its IP legal protection and press ahead with its policy initiatives to promote and facilitate IP commercialization, Chan believes creators and inventors, whether they are inside or outside Hong Kong, will be more inclined to tap into the city's IP-related expertise and services, to protect, manage and commercialize the fruits of their creativity, as well as R&D.

Hong Kong: a resilient global aviation hub

By CAI JING in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is set to enhance its status as an international aviation hub in the post-pandemic era on the back of its robust infrastructure and a new quality training facility, according to industry leaders.

In the face of the exceptional challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Hong Kong has withstood the test and is now gearing up to recapture its aviation glory by nurturing new talent and expanding Hong Kong International Airport's handling capacity for both passengers and cargo.

"Hong Kong always overcomes its challenges, and comes out better in the end," said Jack So Chak-kwong, chairman of the Airport Authority Hong Kong, or AAHK, noting that it has already started recovery programs.

The Hong Kong International Airport, or HKIA, has continued to see a year-on-year surge in the number of people using the airport. In April, the number of passengers soared to about 3.1 million, which is around 24 times higher than that for April 2022.

The rally has been underpinned by a flurry of policy easing measures and lifting of travel restrictions in the wake of the pandemic. Quarantine-free travel between the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong resumed on Jan 8. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government has now removed all social distancing measures related to COVID-19, as the city returns to normalcy.

At the HKIA, a third runway, measuring 3,800 meters long and 60 meters wide, was put into operation in July 2022 as part of AAHK's Three-Runway System project. The project includes expanding Terminal 2 and building a new T2 concourse, automated people mover system and high-speed baggage handling system. The entire project is due to be completed by 2024, further cementing Hong Kong's role as an aviation hub on the global stage.

The Three-Runway System is expected to increase the total handling capacity of the HKIA to 120 million passengers and 10 million tons of cargo per year. That compares to about 75 million passengers and 5 million tons of cargo before the pandemic.



A Cathay Pacific flight takes off at the Hong Kong International Airport, which is expanding its runways, terminal and concourse, and will handle around 120 million passengers and 10 million tons of cargo per year, further cementing Hong Kong's position as a global aviation hub. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

I&T blueprint charting a clear way for industry development

By CAI JING in Hong Kong

Stakeholders of the innovation and technology industry are confident that the Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Blueprint will provide a comprehensive, forward-looking and strategic roadmap for I&T development in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Under the blueprint, announced in December 2022, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government set out eight major strategies to foster the development of the I&T industry under four broad development directions: enhancing the I&T ecosystem and promoting "new industrialization" in Hong Kong, enlarging the I&T talent pool, promoting the development of the digital economy, and proactively integrating into the overall development of the country.

Sunny Chai Ngai-chiu, chairman of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, said: "The blueprint charts a clear way forward for Hong Kong's I&T development in the next five to 10 years."

He emphasized Hong Kong's unique advantage of research-innovation-finance, or R-I-F, in developing the I&T industry, transforming R&D into economic outcomes.



Charles K. Kao Auditorium, commonly known as the Golden Egg, is the principal landmark of the Hong Kong Science Park. The Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation and Cyberport are the flagship institutions of Hong Kong that promote innovation and technology industries under the support of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"Hong Kong is a global gateway for the Chinese mainland. With Hong Kong's unique advantages, we can play the strategic role of attracting in and expanding out, which are very appealing to overseas enterprises to set up offices in Hong Kong," Chai said, adding that Hong Kong should make good use of the R-I-F value chain to hasten technology commercialization.

"The government could step up its

efforts to explore more facilitation measures with the mainland authorities to promote the convenient cross-boundary flow of innovation resources, such as capital, personnel, data and materials," Chai said.

The HKSTP has built an I&T base with 12,000 research personnel and more than 1,200 startups, and has facilitated over 260 investment deals that raised over HK\$80.2 billion (\$10.23 billion) in the past five years.

"The blueprint outlined comprehensive, forward-looking and strategic missions and initiatives for the upcoming critical period for Hong Kong's I&T development, steering Hong Kong at full steam toward the vision of developing into an international I&T center," said Simon Chan Sai-ming, chairman of the Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company.

Currently, the Cyberport community is an I&T ecosystem with over 1,900 startups and technology companies. The Cyberport Macro Fund and co-investments have injected over HK\$1.76 billion into 27 projects, with a co-investment ratio of 1:9.

"Cyberport strives to collaborate with the government and society to facilitate Hong Kong's integration into the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area for synergistic advancement, while playing the role of a gateway linking the mainland and the world, and contributing innovative impetus to the development of our country on a new journey," Chan said. The HKSTP and Cyberport are institutions supported by the Hong Kong government to promote the I&T industry, catalyzing the mainland cooperation platform to hasten I&T industry development.

Inovo Robotics, a manufacturer of

robotic arms used in manufacturing, research application and education, as well as a HKSTP incubate company, also welcomed the I&T blueprint.

"The blueprint's strategy to diversify financing channels for the private sector in the forms of venture capital and private equity funding is most welcome," Inovo Robotics Co-founder Jonathan Cheung said.

He added that the Hong Kong government could assist in retaining strategic enterprises and bolstering the existing industries to showcase successful cases of Hong Kong enterprises, as well as bridging the financing needs of the I&T community in Hong Kong by incentivizing the private sector to make investments.

While pursuing the "Inno-facturing Tomorrow" strategy by repositioning Hong Kong as an advanced manufacturing hub, the HKSTP's next step is to expand Hong Kong's I&T ecosystem into the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, forming a value chain that covers upstream, midstream and downstream processes. HKSTP Shenzhen Branch will open in phases in 2023, with the branch establishing incubation networks in the city-cluster area to facilitate "attracting in and expanding out," and facilitating cross-boundary I&T collaboration.

So said the ultimate goal was to establish a comprehensive ecosystem under the "Airport City" vision, which comprises hotels, offices, retail, entertainment and other commercial developments, thereby driving the economic growth of Hong Kong and its neighboring regions.

In addition to the Three-Runway System, the AAHK is taking steps to enhance connectivity between the airport and other cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, or GBA. This will help integrate Hong Kong into the GBA.

"I believe that the future for Hong Kong is bright and that we'll resume our role as China's gateway to the world," So said.

President of the Hong Kong International Aviation Academy, or HKIAA, Simon Li Tin-chui, was equally upbeat. "We can foresee that the completion of the Three-Runway System at the HKIA in 2024 will create more opportunities. There is a greater need than ever for talented individuals to join the aviation industry."

Li was confident in the city's ability to nurture and retain local talents. With five training centers covering air traffic management, airport operations and crisis management, aviation security and safety, flight training and engineering as well as foundation and academic programs, the HKIAA offers a diverse curriculum that not only caters to the training needs of aviation professionals, but also newcomers to the industry and young people looking to pursue a career in aviation.

The HKIAA will also collaborate with education institutions in the mainland to launch the GBA Youth Aviation Industry Internship Program, whereby students from the mainland will undertake classroom training at the HKIAA, followed by an 11-month training internship in one of the following aviation professions at the HKIA: aircraft engineering, customer/ground handling services, ramp/flight operations services, air cargo, airline catering, aviation security and aviation development. It is expected that about 300 students will join the program in the first year.