



The British
Chamber of Commerce
in Hong Kong
香港英商會

2020-22

BRITCHAM POLICY & ADVOCACY WORK



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FORWARD NOTE

The British Chamber of Commerce is one of Hong Kong's largest and most active international business organisations representing a broad range of British, Hong Kong and international companies doing business in, with, or through Hong Kong.

The Chamber's aim is to help our members grow their business, and to promote and represent their business interests, by providing representation and advocacy; networking and brand exposure; as well as information and insight.

A key focus of the Chamber's work is our policy and advocacy efforts on behalf of members. In that regard, we work closely with our members to develop our policy submissions drawing on their extensive experience and knowledge. Our policy work takes the form of written submissions and meetings with representatives of the Administration and other stakeholders. Working with and through our Committees, we are able to provide not only detailed and timely discussions and insights on important sectoral and trade issues but also a broader perspective on business policy issues in order to promote Hong Kong as a leading international financial and trading hub, and as an attractive place to live and work.

That broader perspective is particularly highlighted by our annual Policy Address submission where we seek to make general observations and policy suggestions but also actionable recommendations to the Administration.

The strength and depth of our membership and their longstanding ties with Hong Kong mean we are very well placed, as a Chamber, to provide value to the policy debate in Hong Kong and is why the quality of our input is widely regarded.

This document is a summary of the policy and advocacy work that we have done over the past three years. It also demonstrates the partnerships that the Chamber has with other local and international business Chambers and think-tanks.

If you or your organisation would like to get more involved in our policy or advocacy work, we would love to hear from you and would encourage you to join one of our committees or working groups.

For more information, please feel free to contact the Chamber at info@britcham.com.

David Graham,
Executive Director

November 2022



AREAS OF FOCUS



KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Chamber Members
HK Government
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
China Liaison Office
UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
Wider Business Community in Hong Kong

POLICY ADDRESS SUBMISSIONS

The Chamber's annual Policy Address submission is a major piece of work that we conduct each year in the lead-up to the Chief Executive's Policy Address. We seek feedback from our members through our Committees to provide general observations and policy suggestions as well as actionable recommendations. We proactively study and revise these according to the current business environment before submitting them to the Administration.

The Chamber is proud of these detailed submissions which have a primary focus on Hong Kong as a major financial and trading hub and an attractive place to live and work.

In order to monitor the effectiveness of our recommendations, we also conduct a policy matching exercise. This exercise seeks to highlight the synergies between the Chamber's recommendations and the plans that are set out in the Chief Executive's Policy Address each year.

2022

“Five Steps to Plan Ahead for a Better Tomorrow”

[Click here to read the submission.](#)

[Click here to read the matching exercise.](#)

2021

“Building Back Better”

[Click here to read the submission.](#)

[Click here to read the matching exercise.](#)

2020

“Recovery, Rebuilding and Repositioning”

[Click here to read the submission.](#)

[Click here to read the matching exercise.](#)

THE NEXT 25 YEARS AND BEYOND

The BritCham Hong Kong Summit

The Chamber held a Summit in September 2022 which was one of the largest and most important events for the international business community in Hong Kong. With a key focus of exploring the opportunities ahead for Hong Kong as a catalyst for international business growth in the region, we brought together senior leaders from all sectors to share their opinions and offer valuable insights on the next 25 years for Hong Kong, and beyond.

The Summit agenda covered business relevant topics such as the latest developments within the GBA, an exploration of the ASEAN opportunities, the positioning of Hong Kong as a centre for Innovation and Technology, Hong Kong's response to climate change and the increasing war for talent.

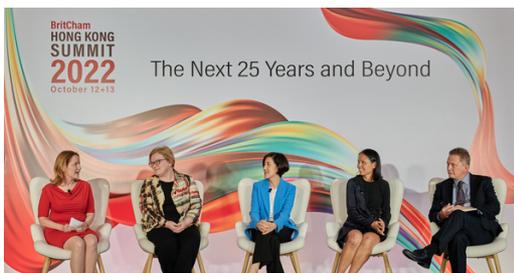
400+
ATTENDEES

17
SPONSORS

45
SPEAKERS

1.5
DAYS

[Click here to see more.](#)



COVID-19 MEASURES

COVID-19 has been on everyone's agenda for the past 2.5 years. The Chamber has lobbied the Hong Kong Government on a variety of issues including re-opening the borders, quarantine measures, supporting the vaccination drive, financial relief for businesses, and more, encouraging the Hong Kong Government to provide a detailed roadmap and more clarity on the criteria in order to continue the easing of quarantine requirements and social distancing measures. This remains a critical short-term issue in which the Chamber is heavily engaged.

Talent shortage and business planning have become an increasing challenge; we are eager to see measures eased allowing businesses to operate more efficiently and for Hong Kong to retain its status as an international and regional financial and trading hub, and gateway to the Mainland.

RECENT SUBMISSIONS



NO. 04 – RE-OPENING OF BORDERS

- Letter to the Chief Executive stressing the importance of re-opening the border and the longer-term rebuilding of confidence which will be necessary to re-emphasise Hong Kong's reputation as the leading international trading and financial centre in Asia.



NO. 02 – VACCINATION DRIVE

- The Chamber responds to a letter from the Chief Executive titled 'Early Vaccination for All'



NO. 03 – QUARANTINE ARRANGEMENTS

- The Chamber writes to Secretary Cheung to discuss quarantine arrangements and vaccination uptake



NO. 01 – FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO BUSINESSES

- 2022 Employment Support Scheme (ESS)

GREATER BAY AREA

The Greater Bay Area initiative ("GBA") has generated a great deal of interest amongst the Chamber members. We see the GBA as presenting a major strategic opportunity for Hong Kong to further develop its economic and business role; to leverage its distinctive strengths and characteristics under One Country Two Systems, including its separate legal system, financial expertise and unparalleled international business connectivity, so as to make a central contribution to the success of the overall GBA strategy. Furthermore, we see the GBA as an opportunity to re-set the international view of Hong Kong and confidently demonstrate a vision for its future role with the Mainland, Asia and internationally.

There are challenges that need to be addressed to facilitate the free movement of people, goods and capital, and the free flow of information and data. These are essential to the functioning of an economically effective GBA.

Leveraging a request in 2020 by the Chief Executive for the business community to actively provide input, the Chamber submitted two position papers which set out the Chamber's thinking across thirteen sectors.

GBA Position Paper #1

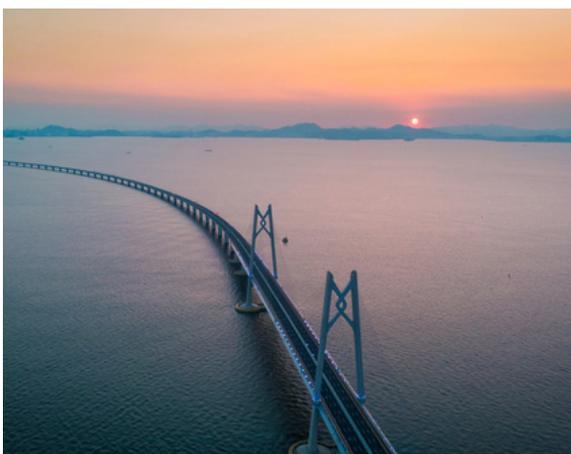


Submitted in June 2020 with recommendations across five key sectors:

1. Financial Services
2. Logistics
3. Healthcare
4. Education
5. Energy and Environment.

[Click here to read the full paper.](#)

GBA Position Paper #2



The second paper submitted covers the following areas/sectors:

1. Real Estate
2. Construction and Infrastructure
3. Information and Technology
4. SMEs
5. Retail and Hospitality
6. Professional Services
7. Dispute Resolution
8. Diversity and Inclusion.

[Click here to read the full paper.](#)

CONTINUED...

GBA Business Network

To further co-ordination, information sharing and co-operation, the Chamber formed an inter-organisation network on the Greater Bay Area (GBA) initiative. The purpose of this Network is to collaborate together to develop policy recommendations to offer to governments and regulators across the region, as well as working with the British Government and relevant departments to help member companies understand and access the business opportunities arising from the GBA initiative.

[Click here to see the webpage.](#)



BritCham GBA Summit 2021

The Chamber hosted a Summit in June 2021, opened by the former HKSAR Chief Executive Carrie Lam, where we heard from Government and leading industry experts who shared their insight on the business implications of the initiative, the specific opportunities it will generate, and what we can do as a business community to drive its success.

[Click here to see more.](#)

SPEAKERS

“ The Summit helped us better understand the needs of corporations as they look at the opportunities of the Greater Bay Area. In Hong Kong, we should continue the quest to play our unique role better for the benefit of all. To this end, effective stakeholder engagement is essential. ”

Elizabeth Fung
Political Assistant to Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Hong Kong SAR Government

The graphic displays 33 circular portraits of the speakers at the summit, arranged in a grid. The background is dark blue with light blue and white geometric patterns.

585 Registrations

10 Sessions

16 Sponsors

33 Speakers

The statistics are presented in light blue rounded rectangular boxes, each with a vertical bar on the right side.

HEALTHCARE

Digital Healthcare

Following a meeting with the Chief Executive, the Chamber submitted a detailed paper on digital healthcare. The paper analysed in detail the WHO's digital health strategy; international experience in digital health across a number of jurisdictions; and the current position in Hong Kong, before then going on to set out our recommendations, both in terms of quick wins and a longer-term strategy. Key recommendations included:

- Healthcare data openness to support a data-driven resource prioritisation model across the entire patient journey.
- Enhancements to healthcare system efficiency to give better patient outcomes through technology adoption and simplify administration.
- Accelerated adoption of the HKID and iAM Smart ID as secure mechanisms.

[Click here to read the full paper.](#)

BritCham Digital Health Symposium 2021 Smarter Healthcare for the Future

As a follow-up to the digital healthcare paper, the Chamber hosted a half-day symposium which highlighted Hong Kong's digital health strategy, took stock of progress, and discussed some of the challenges of implementation.



[Click here to see more.](#)

CONTINUED...

Oncology

Throughout 2021, the BritCham Oncology sub-committee met on numerous occasions to share information, insight and experience on a wide range of topics relating to cancer and cancer treatments in Hong Kong and elsewhere. They conducted a comparative analysis on waiting times and the approval times/enlistment mechanisms for new drugs in Hong Kong and other jurisdictions. A subsequent list of recommendations/action points were formulated and shared with the Food and Drug Bureau and the Hospital Authority. These include:

- Stepping up preventative oncology health screening programmes, with faster access to specialist treatment for suspected cancer cases and a significant improvement in drug access aligned with international standards, using a range of new partnership approaches to provide faster and better outcomes for patients, while mitigating the impact on costs.
- Improving patient access to therapy.
- Using Innovative technologies to deliver holistic services.
- Improving cancer registry.

[Click here to view the letter.](#)

Mental health

Mental Health is another important priority, as we begin to better understand the impact of COVID and other social/demographic trends in our city. In our 2021 Polcy Address Submission, we made recommendations to allocate resources more broadly to properly recognise, detect, and treat mental health conditions in society and encourage and facilitate employers to provide health insurance that covers mental illnesses, which will provide better mental health support and relieve the pressure on the already over-stretched public health system.

Children's mental health must also be incorporated as an integral part of the Governments' mental health focus, offering a rapid solution by adopting a community-based service with a Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP) approach to enable the private sector to provide support to minimize delays in diagnosis and treatment in child mental health issues.

[Click here to view the letter.](#)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Public-Private-Partnerships

The Chamber has long been an advocate for Public-Private-Partnerships (“PPPs”) and has set up a working group to focus on the potential to adopt more PPPs or Public-Private-Cooperation models in Hong Kong.

The infrastructure pipeline now proposed for Hong Kong, including the Northern Metropolis, is more substantial and significant than ever before. In a letter to the Chief Executive, we set out the benefits of getting private sector support, including a number of successful local and international PPP projects for reference, and list of recommendations on how PPP models could be incorporated in future projects.

We recommended that the private sector be engaged in a material role at the early planning stage to provide design and delivery expertise as well as innovation in financing. This will enable the acceleration of a significant number of large construction and infrastructure projects to deliver Hong Kong’s future.

[Click here to read the full submission.](#)



CONTINUED...

BritCham Infrastructure Symposium **Delivering Hong Kong's Future**

Hong Kong is one of the world's most densely populated cities and its geographical location is often seen as one of the major factors in its success as an international business hub. However, infrastructure plays a significant role in the mobility, economic productivity, liveability and sustainability of a city. How can Hong Kong meet all of these needs?

To address this question, the Chamber hosted a half-day virtual Symposium in April 2022 entitled 'Delivering Hong Kong's Future'. We welcomed industry experts to share their insights and learnings across three sessions:

- 1) Dream Big
- 2) Delivering Infrastructure
- 3) The Role of the Private Sector

[Click here to see more.](#)



SUPPORT FOR SMES

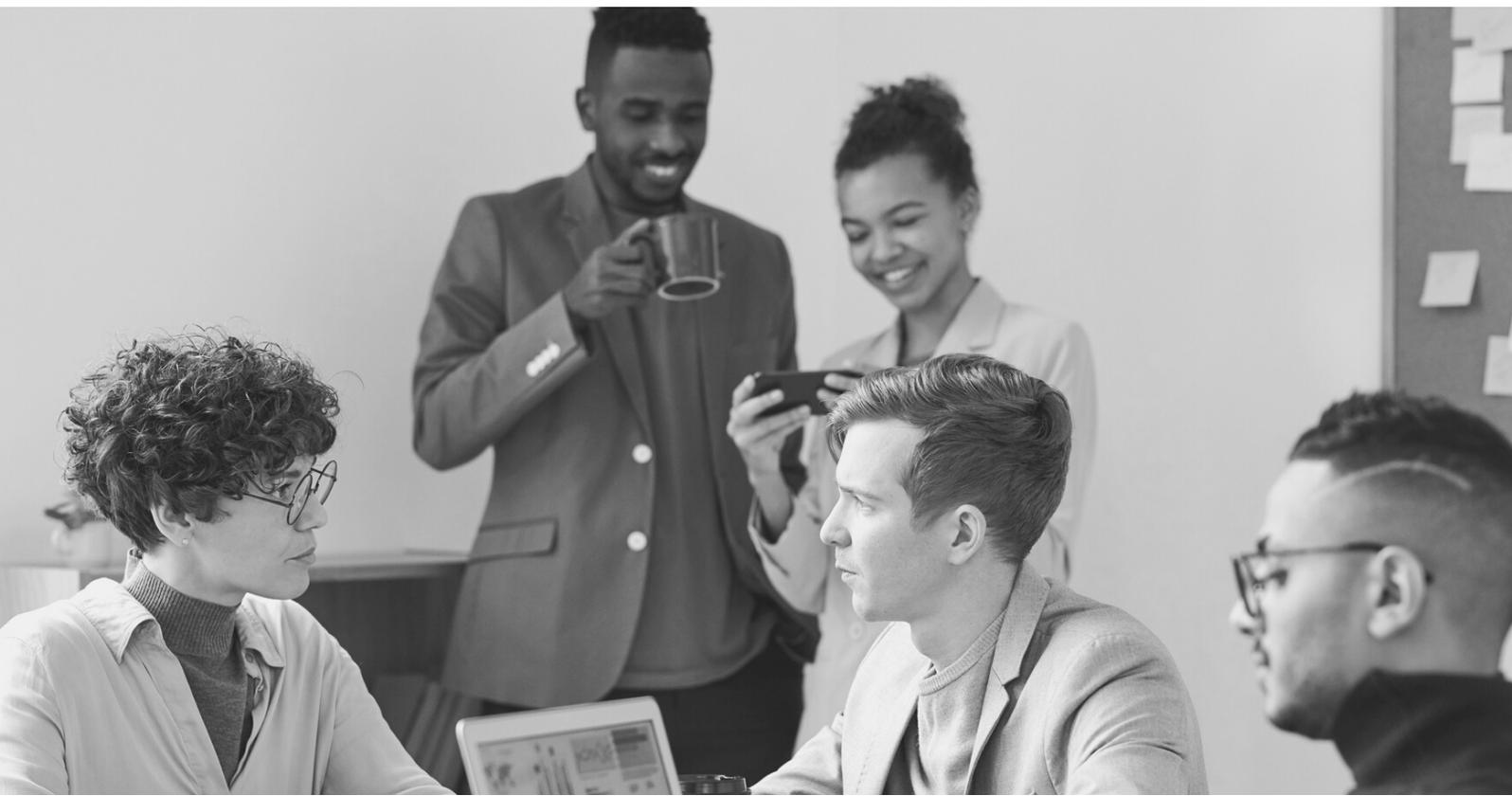
SMEs are a key segment of the Hong Kong economy. The Chamber has been advocating for more support for the SME community particularly since COVID. With the support of the Chamber's SME Committee, we have identified some of the key challenges that the SME community face which include limited financial support during COVID and difficulty accessing grants.

We addressed some of the key challenges and put forward various recommendations to the Hong Kong Government. These included the following:

- Streamlining grant application processes.
- Encouraging the Hong Kong Government to pay for some or all of the MPF Employer Contributions.
- Implementation of a Solvency Capitalisation Scheme – suggestion to make a convertible loan investment in “qualifying companies” through a termed convertible loan note.

KEY SUBMISSIONS

1. [Policy Address Submission 2021](#)
2. [Policy Address Submission 2020](#)
3. [Solvency Capitalisation Scheme \(“SCS”\)](#)



EDUCATION

Hong Kong is renowned for its high-quality international education. However, in recent years, children have met severe challenges in obtaining the education they deserve due to COVID restrictions. The Chamber and its Education Committee have proactively been lobbying the Government concerning social distancing measures that would impact day-to-day education and place the student welfare at stake.

The Chamber has highlighted to Government the challenges schools and children face and made relevant recommendations to urge, most importantly, the permanent resumption of in-person teaching and the critical need not to disrupt the international school calendar. We also urged the Government to put a structure around the point of contact within the Education Bureau, including to look after any international schooling matters raised by COVID with a desired outcome of increasing efficiency in the communication and government planning.

KEY SUBMISSIONS

1. [Letter to CE Combating Covid - 2022 March](#)
2. [Letter to Secretary for Education - 2022 April](#)



WORKING GROUPS

Over the past two years, we have set up dedicated Working Groups where there are specific topics of interest and areas of expertise.

National Security Law (NSL)

The Chamber set up a NSL working group to closely monitor the new law and sought clarifications over definitions and timing of the proposed legislation. The focus was on helping our members understand the business implications of the legislation so as to assist business planning and avoid inadvertent non-compliance. In this regard, we raised detailed questions with the Government through written submissions and meetings with Government officials.

[Click here to read the published Q&A.](#)

BEPS 2.0

In July 2021, 133 jurisdictions, including Hong Kong, proposed a global minimum effective tax rate of at least 15% be applied on a jurisdiction by jurisdiction basis that is intended to take effect from 2023. This would be challenging for jurisdictions like Hong Kong where the territorial system of taxation and various incentives can mean that many companies have an effective tax rate well below 15%.

Within the Chamber, we set up a small working group to consider this important initiative and wrote a letter to the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury which set out a number of the issues raised by the working group for further consideration.

[Click here to read the full letter.](#)

Data Governance

The Chamber believes that free movement of data across borders is critically important for Hong Kong to retain its status as an international financial centre. We have set up a Data Governance working group to hear the concerns from different industries on how regulations (both in the Mainland and internationally) impact businesses in Hong Kong and to understand what practices businesses are adopting to cope with changes in legislation. In a recent letter, we encouraged the Privacy Commissioner to develop as an urgent priority Hong Kong's data laws.

[Click here to read the full letter and see our recommendations.](#)

OTHER FOCUS AREAS

We have also identified other key focus areas within the Chamber which are critical to our members and to Hong Kong's future. These cross Committee focus areas are the subject of the Chamber's ongoing dialogue with members, Government, industry bodies and business organisations. They also feature in our Events programme and within our annual Policy Address submissions.

[Click here to see our latest Policy Address.](#)

Climate Action

The Chamber is supportive of the goals of Hong Kong to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050. However, we recognise that it is challenging. The Chamber will be actively promoting the importance of carbon reduction, lobbying the Government with our members' suggestions to achieve the targets set out for 2050. Our initiatives in this area are being led by our Environment and Energy Committee.

Talent

There is currently a global war for talent and many member companies have experienced difficulties with identifying and bringing in the best talent to Hong Kong. COVID restrictions have exacerbated this and employers not only find it hard to hire overseas talent, but also to retain the talent they currently have. The Chamber will continue to discuss this issue with Government and other stakeholders.

Diversity & Inclusion

Hong Kong has been named one of the most international cities in the world, yet more could still be done to promote diversity and inclusion (D&I). Through our Social Sustainability Committee and our Women in Business Committee we are promoting D&I within the Chamber, and proactively working alongside NGOs to promote the importance of D&I in businesses and Hong Kong more generally.

BE PART OF THE DIALOGUE

For more information, please feel free to contact the Chamber at info@britcham.com.

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