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Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Chief Executive's Office
Central Government Offices
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

8 July 2026

Dear Chief Executive

**2026 POLICY ADDRESS SUBMISSION
AND RESPONSE TO THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN CONSULTATION**

On behalf of The British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, I am delighted to present our suggestions for the upcoming 2026 Policy Address. Our submission introduces a comprehensive suite of policy recommendations designed to support Hong Kong's long-term economic development and reinforce its position as an open, confident and globally connected international city.

Our interest is entirely aligned with the city's prosperity, resilience and international competitiveness; the long-term success of our 1,100+ members is inseparable from the long-term success of Hong Kong. Representing a broad cross-section of financial services, professional services, trade, technology, infrastructure, and innovation sectors, our views reflect real, on-the-ground commercial experience from our members and a deep commitment to the city's future.

Welcoming Hong Kong's First Five-Year Plan

The Chamber welcomes the HKSAR Government's publication of the First Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development (2026-2030) Public Consultation Document. The introduction of this strategic blueprint represents a vital milestone in executive-led governance, deepening domestic reforms and establishing a clear trajectory for high-quality development. Because the strategic directions set out in the Five-Year Plan carry profound long-term implications for our industries, we have intentionally structured our Policy Address submission to address these core priority sectors. Our attached recommendations highlight the specific levers that our membership believes are critical to the successful execution of the plan. This submission should therefore be regarded as the Chamber's response to the Government's public consultation.

Our Members' Three Core Priorities

In gathering input from across our diverse membership, our committees have identified three overriding priorities that stand out as the most critical factors for sustaining business confidence, driving investment, and securing Hong Kong's competitive edge:



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- **International Narrative is Paramount:** Our members emphasise that Hong Kong's global reputation relies heavily on lived experience and coherence of messaging. Businesses want to see a proactive, professional communication strategy that features private-sector experiences to boldly showcase Hong Kong as a dynamic, progressive cultural and commercial incubator on the world stage. We will continue with our Asia's World City x BritCham Campaign to champion Hong Kong, and we make some proposals on how the government could leverage on the feedback we have received as it considers its own branding strategy.
- **Macro Strategies Must Be Transformed into Tangible Commercial Opportunities:** For international corporate stakeholders and SMEs, high-level policy intent must bridge the gap to operational reality. Whether navigating transformational mega-projects like the Northern Metropolis or assisting Mainland enterprises with outbound ("GoGlobal") expansion, our members require clear regulatory signals, standardised frameworks, and predictable procurement pipelines to confidently unlock substantial private-sector co-investment.
- **Structured Bilateral Policy Dialogue Must Be Preserved and Expanded:** Our membership views regular, structured government-to-government policy engagement between the UK and Hong Kong as a vital mechanism for sustaining international trade. Government and industry focus must remain firmly anchored on deep institutional and regulatory links in capital markets, wealth management and common law dispute resolution services, while actively driving bilateral cooperation in high-growth ecosystems like FinTech, digital assets, and life sciences.

Conclusion

The Chamber offers these perspectives in a true spirit of partnership. We look forward to the opportunity to meet with you and your team to discuss how these practical, business-led recommendations can best support the successful realisation of the First Five-Year Plan and secure the city's future prosperity.

Yours sincerely,

Paul McSheaffrey

Chair, The British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong

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**2026
POLICY
ADDRESS &
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SUBMISSION**



CONTENT TABLE

INTRODUCTION	3
LIVE	
Part 1: Northern Metropolis - An Engine of Growth	5
Part 2: Housing - Better Homes, Resilient Markets, and Modern Living	7
Part 3: Healthcare - Value-Driven, Innovative, and Secure System	10
Part 4: Transport & Energy - Low-Carbon Hub, Smart Mobility, and Transition Finance	12
WORK	
Part 5: IFC - Global Connectivity	14
Part 6: AI & Workforce - Commercialisation & Workforce Resilience	16
Part 7: Construction - Cost Efficiency and Modern Public Infrastructure	18
Part 8: SME - Modernised Financing and Agile Procurement	20
PLAY	
Part 9: Tourism & Event Economy - Digital Ecosystems, Vibrancy, and Governance	22
Part 10: City Branding - Strategic Communication and Global Storytelling	24
LEARN	
Part 11: Talent - Retention, Newcomer Readiness, and Housing Support	25
Part 12: Equity & Inclusion - Living Wages, Family Support, and Diversity	27
Part 13: English - Next-Generation Proficiency	29
Part 14: Schools - Ecosystem Development, Education Flexibility and Capacity	30

INTRODUCTION

The British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the 2026 Policy Address and Hong Kong's inaugural Five-Year Plan, and to continue our longstanding, constructive engagement with the HKSAR Government. We do so as a committed stakeholder in Hong Kong's future, at a time when global economic uncertainty, geopolitical complexity, and intensifying competition among international cities are reshaping the operating environment for business and policy alike.

In this context, the Chamber's perspective is grounded in a clear and consistent principle: **the long-term success of our members is inseparable from the long-term success of Hong Kong**. Our interests are entirely aligned with the city's prosperity, resilience, and international competitiveness. As businesses that have chosen Hong Kong as their base for regional and global activity, our members are deeply invested - commercially, professionally, and personally - in Hong Kong remaining an open, confident, and globally connected international city.

As one of Hong Kong's most established international chambers, representing over 1,100 members across financial services, professional services, trade, technology, infrastructure, and innovation, the Chamber reflects a broad cross-section of enterprises that contribute directly to Hong Kong's economy. Our membership spans major UK and international corporates, SMEs, and entrepreneurs - many of whom have operated in Hong Kong for decades and continue to expand their footprint here. The views expressed in this submission are therefore informed by on-the-ground commercial experience, active participation in Hong Kong's economy, and sustained engagement with international markets.

We recognise that policy effectiveness today depends not only on sound technical design, but also on clarity of intent, consistency of delivery, and credibility in how Hong Kong presents itself to the world. For international businesses and investors, confidence is shaped as much by lived experience and coherence of messaging as by formal policy frameworks. Against this backdrop, the Chamber sees significant value in offering practical, business-led input that complements government priorities, supports effective implementation, and mirrors the strategic goals of the National 15th Five-Year Plan.

Asia's World City x BritCham Campaign

This submission provides 14 targeted policy chapters organised under the four operational pillars of our campaign to promote Hong Kong - LIVE, WORK, PLAY, LEARN. These proposals provide a clear roadmap spanning immediate administrative adjustments and long-term milestones up to 2030.

LIVE:

- **Northern Metropolis:** In direct response to Part 1 of the Five-Year Plan Public Consultation Document (the Consultation), we recommend formulating a long-term strategy to transform the Northern Metropolis into a sustainable, revenue-generating engine while solidifying private sector confidence and catalysing substantial co-investment.

- **Housing Networks:** We propose accelerating the deployment of Build-to-Rent networks, non-institutional senior housing pathways, and system-level energy retrofit mandates to attract global green financing.
- **Healthcare Reforms:** Matching the industrial goals of Part 3 of the Consultation, we advocate establishing an outcome-driven biomedical gateway through Value-Based Healthcare indicators, faster drug registration, and robust public health stockpiles.
- **Low-Carbon Initiatives:** To support the carbon-neutrality targets in Part 6 of the Consultation, our members call for the adoption of commercial electric vehicles, harbour fleet electrification, GBA integration, and sustainable maritime and aviation fuel hubs in alignment with green development goals.

WORK:

- **International Financial Centre:** Supporting the financial mandates in Part 2 of the Consultation, we propose positioning Hong Kong as a Global Joint Venture hub to provide a trusted framework for outward Chinese Mainland capital and enterprises and bringing Summer Davos to Hong Kong.
- **AI Commercialisation & Upskilling:** In alignment with Part 3 of the Consultation, we recommend leveraging the professional services sector to accelerate real-world AI applications and sustainable deployment of the digital infrastructure while equipping the local workforce and fresh graduates with specialised, industry-aligned upskilling.
- **SME Support:** We propose updating the SME definition to include multi-factor thresholds like turnover and employee count, creating distinct short-term and long-term financing tracks under public funds, and deploying a vendor whitelist for fast-track reimbursement.

PLAY:

- **Event Ecosystems:** To reinforce the cultural and tourism integration in Part 6 of the Consultation, we propose connecting major venues like Kai Tak with local dining communities, deploying a unified "HK Play Pass" digital ecosystem to integrate the visitor economy, and appointing a Night Mayor to safely unlock 24-hour economic potential.
- **Global Brand:** We suggest investing in professional PR expertise to showcase Hong Kong as a dynamic cultural incubator and transforming individual success stories into an authentic, global multi-channel advocacy campaign.

LEARN:

- **Talent Integration and Retention:** Directly addressing Part 3 of the Consultation on high-calibre talent hub objectives, we recommend enhancing Top Talent Pass Scheme support by focusing on sustainable long-term retention, graduate housing settlement solutions, and international school placement pipelines.
- **Education Capacity:** To support Part 4 of the Consultation, we advocate for optimising educational land use in the Northern Metropolis, repurposing decommissioned facilities, and implementing flexible international-to-local student ratio structures to anchor global families.

A Shared Commitment to Hong Kong's Long-Term Success

The detailed chapters set out in this submission are intentionally interconnected. Together, they reflect a unified vision of Hong Kong as a confident, open, and globally engaged international city whose competitiveness is at its absolute strongest when government and business move in lockstep.

The Chamber offers these perspectives in a true spirit of partnership. Our members' success is inseparable from Hong Kong's success, and we remain deeply committed to working constructively with the HKSAR Government to strengthen the city's international standing, economic resilience, and long-term prosperity. We look forward to continuing, fruitful dialogue as the 2026 Policy Address and development of Hong Kong first Five-Year Plan take shape.

HONG KONG THE LIVE HONG FAST KONG TRACK HONG

Part 1: Northern Metropolis - An Engine of Growth

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should set a bold ambition for the Northern Metropolis to be a **sustainable, revenue-generating growth engine** by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1** ***Pioneer high-value economic sectors** by actively anchoring global technology and business leaders, building a commercially driven ecosystems, and modernising local retail models; and*
- 2** ***Solidify private sector confidence** and **catalyse substantial co-investment** through dedicated infrastructure funding and centralised governance; and*
- 3** ***Establish a globally recognised benchmark** and **climate-resilient standards** for smart, sustainable, and nature-positive urban development that secures long-term ecological resilience.*

1.1 - Change Business Perceptions through Strategic Anchoring: Many businesses still view the Northern Metropolis as a logistics backyard rather than a high-end commercial hub. Shifting this narrative is important and requires bridging government vision and private-sector confidence. The central question is: where is the opportunity for businesses to move? Granted, we have witnessed a promising step forward with the launch of the Hung Shui Kiu Industrial Park Company, which mirrors the successful Science Park model by taking an active role in welcoming global headquarters. We are pleased to see this approach because it recognises that companies often look for proof of tangible opportunities before committing. By anchoring the region with tech leaders, the Government provides exactly that proof. Once these key anchors are in place, the perception of the Northern Metropolis will naturally evolve from a backyard into a high-end commercial destination and a primary engine for global and local business growth.

1.2 - Strengthen Private Sector Confidence by Formalising Funding and Centralising Governance: In our previous budget submission, we recommended the Government commit a defined percentage of the Sustainable and Infrastructure Bond specifically to Northern Metropolis projects - we remain committed to advancing this proposal. From a developer's perspective, this proposal is a de-risking mechanism rather than a mere fiscal request. In the current economic climate, the private sector is understandably wary of long-gestation projects where government priorities might shift over a twenty-year horizon. By formally tethering a fixed portion of the bond proceeds, the Government establishes a "floor" for infrastructure readiness. This transparency gives developers the confidence to bid on land sales because they know the Government will build the supporting infrastructure alongside their projects.

To complement this commitment with administrative agility, we further proposed the establishment of a statutory body to manage Northern Metropolis Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). This body would act as a centralised window for negotiations, ensuring efficiency and accountability in procurement. We recommend anchoring this initiative within the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau to leverage its procurement expertise. Success would pave the way for this body to become the central manager for all government PPP procurement in the future.

1.3 - Build a Commercially Driven AI Ecosystem: We praise the Government's ambition to transform Sandy Ridge into a premier data centre cluster, reflecting a strong commitment to establishing Hong Kong as a global AI hub within the Northern Metropolis. To build on this momentum, we suggest data centre deals should shift from simple land sales toward a more commercially driven ecosystem. This should be done through comprehensive infrastructure support, like energy storage, specialised talent, transportation, data governance, and GPU access.

To attract international cloud and AI providers, Hong Kong should also leverage its status as an IFC and define its unique value proposition. Importantly, adhering to international sustainability standards should be viewed as a competitive advantage and a "magnet" for high-quality providers, rather than a regulatory constraint. Hong Kong should establish a Green Data Centre (HK-GDC) Sustainability Standard aligned with international benchmarks like ISO 50001 and LEED, applying tiered performance levels to all new builds. This framework must link capacity growth to rigorous energy, carbon, and water performance thresholds.

1.4 - Anchor Northbound Spending by Transforming Local Retail: Northbound consumption - Hong Kongers heading to Shenzhen for grocery shopping and entertainment - has become a defining trend. We suggest that the Government should capitalise on this trend and facilitate the shopping experiences that people currently seek in Shenzhen. For example, in the Hung Shui Kiu Logistics Cluster, Hong Kong can develop a "Warehouse + Distribution" model that functions as both a warehouse club for the public and a retail distribution hub. This model leverages cheaper border-side logistics to match Shenzhen's bulk pricing while offering the convenience. While this concept could serve as a catalyst for modernising local retail, it must be tailored to the city's unique economic realities, particularly the land premiums and labour costs inherent in Hong Kong.

1.5 - Maximise Nature Value through Governance: The wetlands and fishponds in Northern Metropolis are not only conservation assets, but also pillars of support for eco-tourism, education, scientific research, data generation, and restoration services. WWF-Hong Kong research has noted that approximately 90% of local fishermen expressed willingness to continue managing fishponds if adequately supported. Therefore, we recommend that the Government establish a Fishpond Conservation Stewardship Programme, providing direct payments to landowners who maintain vital wetland habitats and biodiversity. To maximise the value of these assets, the district's ecological wealth should be integrated into the universities, creating a living laboratory that connects academic research with hands-on nature education. This approach would operationalise the recently promulgated Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP), transforming the Sam Po Shue Wetland Conservation Park. Translating these ecological gains into long-term resilience requires a formalised oversight structure. This can be most efficiently achieved by embedding a dedicated sustainability function within the Northern Metropolis Co-ordination Office.

Part 2: Housing - Better Homes, Resilient Markets, and Modern Living

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should articulate a clear vision for **affordable housing, building retrofitting, and infrastructure development** to build a more resilient housing market by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1 Enable older residents to age-in-place** in transit-connected neighbourhoods and make senior living a core part of Hong Kong's housing, health and land-optimisation agenda; and
- 2 Replace voluntary building upgrades with system-level policy mandates** to transform Hong Kong's existing buildings into asset-secure structures that actively attract global financing; and
- 3 Pioneer diverse housing solutions and resilient urban models** that harness institutional investment, integrate purpose-built accommodations, and elevate long-term disaster response.

2.1 - Deepen Ageing-in-Place through a Non-institutional Senior Housing Pathway: Hong Kong's ageing policy has the right principle, but delivery remains concentrated at two ends: ageing at home with limited support or in institutional care once needs intensify. Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (RCHE) remain essential for high-acuity care; the immediate task is to build a practical intermediate pathway that allows older residents to remain in private, home-like units close to family, transport and daily life, with support that can increase over time without forcing relocation. To do this, we recommend Government may consider:

- 1) Formally recognise "Senior Housing / Assisted Living" as a distinct non-institutional residential use and introduce a mid-tier licensing route that allows personal care, including overnight support where appropriate, to be delivered within private units without triggering full RCHE classification.
- 2) Establish a streamlined planning and adaptive reuse route for suitable hotels, offices and mixed-use buildings, so senior housing can be delivered in transit-rich urban locations rather than only on scarce purpose-built sites or retail podiums.
- 3) Extend targeted gross floor area and land incentives to non-institutional supportive housing, not only RCHE beds, with eligibility tied to accessibility and clear service standards.

To explore further measures, we recommend the Government refer to the joint whitepaper by Colliers and Hassell, [Senior Living in Dense Cities: Building Dignity and Choice](#).

2.2 - Leverage Existing Buildings to Create a Robust Retrofitting Market and Capability: With over 10,000 existing buildings, retrofitting represents one of the largest and most cost-effective opportunities to reduce emissions, lower operating costs, and protect asset values. Nevertheless, retrofit activity remains fragmented and voluntary. Key barriers include high upfront capital costs, limited access to retrofit-specific finance, long audit cycles with weak follow-through, and insufficient regulatory and tax signals to reward early or ambitious action. The transition now requires system-level policy alignment, combining regulation, finance, standards, and public-sector leadership. To unlock this market, we recommend the Government to transition from voluntary action to system-level policy alignment across three key pillars:

- 1) Modernise the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Schedule 17) to allow accelerated tax deductions for Kigali-compliant cooling equipment and encourage banks to offer performance-linked commercial mortgages.
- 2) Shorten mandatory energy audit cycles from five to three years and mandate operational energy ratings, such as the National Australian Built Environment Rating System, during property transactions to instill market discipline.
- 3) Update building codes to include explicit refrigerant global warming potential limits and mandate life-cycle assessments via the Construction Industry Council's Carbon Assessment Tool to address embodied carbon.

Crucially, these pillars must address the barriers by introducing property-linked financing so commercial landlords do not bear the costs while tenants get all the utility savings, alongside updating building rules so owners can approve energy-saving upgrades with a simple majority vote. To explore further measures, we recommend the Government refer to the research conducted by Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, [Financing the Retrofitting of Hong Kong's Existing Buildings: Unlocking Energy Efficiency for Climate and Economic Goals](#) & [Integrating the Kigali Amendment into Hong Kong's Building Retrofit Strategy](#).

2.3 - Establish the Build-to-Rent Ecosystem through Institutional Investment and Innovation: We maintain our proposal to develop a robust Build-to-Rent (BTR) sector and ecosystem as a strategic solution for both local residents and the growing influx of global talent. To address housing affordability, the Government should tender specific sites for a BTR sector with rental-only lease restrictions. Tender prices must be controlled to ensure affordable rents for tenants while offering developers a reasonable yield. The goal is to group these assets into a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT), providing steady cash flow and a mid- to long-term housing solution. To enhance this model, the Government could integrate asset tokenisation. By representing ownership within the REIT through digital tokens on a blockchain, fundraising could allow for fractional investment from a broader capital base. This would also create a more liquid and transparent exit pathway for developers and investors.

2.4 - Accelerate Purpose-Built Accommodation for Students & Young Professionals: We are happy to see the Development Bureau inviting Expressions of Interest for the first-ever land sale to student hostel use in January. We have long advocated for the expansion of Purpose-Built Student Accommodation and would like to reiterate several approaches to facilitate this growth. The Government can consider tender sites in key urban areas for student-only development. These sites should be sold below residential value but with a higher commercial plot ratio, allowing for larger buildings. Developers could build and stabilise the assets before selling them to long-term institutional funds. This creates a pipeline, meets critical student needs, and provides steady government income. To accelerate this momentum, the sector requires a more agile regulatory framework. Streamlining licensing mechanisms and reducing the friction of converting underutilised commercial, office, or hotel sites is essential. This model can also be expanded beyond students to accommodate young professionals, offering them affordable living options that ease their transition into the workforce.

Furthermore, the Government should prioritise the conversion of industrial buildings by implementing fast-track processing, alongside targeted waivers on lease modifications and land premiums to unlock supply. To provide long-term certainty, the current temporary waiver and change of use measures should be replaced with a permanent, expedited pathway before they expire at the end of 2027.

2.5 - Mandate Affordable Housing Quotas in New Residential Tenders: To increase affordable housing supply, the Government could mandate that a percentage (e.g., 5-10%+) of all new residential tender sites be allocated for this purpose. Developers could have the flexibility to include these units

within the project or construct an equivalent supply elsewhere. The tender and lease pricing must ensure commercial viability, enabling private sector participation in this social need without compromising investor returns

2.6 - Strengthening Centralised Disaster Response: Building on its success in typhoon preparedness, Hong Kong can further solidify its disaster resilience by establishing a permanent Disaster Response and Resilience Office. We suggest expanding existing frameworks into a comprehensive major incident protocol, where the administration can integrate non-governmental organisations and emergency services via modernised, real-time digital platforms for more efficient resource deployment. Furthermore, we suggest the government appoint a Chief Resilience Officer to align long-term infrastructure planning with immediate crisis response, while simultaneously mandating community-level evacuation drills and stricter safety inspections. This integrated approach will ensure that Hong Kong's institutional capabilities are matched by robust regulatory oversight and high public preparedness, securing its position as a regional leader in disaster resilience.

Part 3: Healthcare - A Value Driven, Innovative, and Secure System

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should create a transformative strategy for **high-performance clinical care, robust public health security, and scalable medical financing** by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1 Advance value-based care and forward-looking healthcare financing** by introducing proactive budget reservations, modernising VHIS, and cross-boundary GBA coverage; and
- 2 Accelerate regulatory efficiency and biomedical innovation** through extended data exclusivity protections, localised clinical trial incentives, and dedicated fast-track centres for advanced treatments; and
- 3 Pioneer regional health security** by diversifying antiviral stockpiles aligned with national planning and integrating lifelong health literacy from schools to the workforce.

3.1 - Advance Value-Based Healthcare & Forward-Looking Budgets: The Hospital Authority (HA) fee reforms of 2025, which are expected to generate an additional HKD 3 billion in annual revenue, provide a historic opportunity to redirect investment toward high-value innovative therapies. To this end, we propose that the Government implement “horizon scanning,” a proactive budget reservation mechanism to anticipate and prepare funding for emerging medical technologies before regulatory approval and transition the HA’s performance framework from volume-based metrics to outcome-driven “Value-Based Healthcare” indicators. Furthermore, drug and treatment evaluation criteria should expand beyond narrow budget impact to encompass broader healthcare and societal perspectives, explicitly defining value as health outcomes relative to total costs while accounting for treatment impact on healthcare efficiency, workforce productivity, and reductions in informal caregiving burden.

3.2 - Accelerate Drug Registration Efficiency & Data Exclusivity: To further incentivise pharmaceutical companies to prioritise Hong Kong in their product development pipelines, data exclusivity protection should be extended for extensions of indication, new population groups, and new dosage forms beyond the current single additional year – with an additional two years granted if clinical trials are performed locally. Faster registration and stronger data exclusivity will attract inward pharmaceutical investment, generating returns in corporate tax, employment, and clinical research activity that far exceed the modest regulatory resource investment required.

3.3 - Establish a Centre for Advanced Cell & Gene Therapies: Advanced cell and gene therapies will attract global developers, generate high-value jobs, and ensure Hong Kong patients have access to curative treatments. To achieve this, we suggest the Government should commission a concrete action plan for an advanced cell and gene therapy centre. This initiative should include a dedicated fast-track regulatory approval channel for advanced therapy medicinal products, drawing on best practices from the UK’s Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and Singapore’s Health Sciences Authority.

3.4 - Diversify Strategic Antiviral Stockpiles for Public Health Security: In alignment with China’s 15th Five-Year Plan (Chapter 39, Section 1) on infectious disease control, we suggest diversifying

Hong Kong's strategic antiviral stockpile to include influenza therapeutics, thereby reducing systemic vulnerability to drug resistance. This initiative involves procuring innovative influenza drugs with novel mechanisms and benchmarking the stockpile composition against leading APAC health systems, such as Japan, Australia, and South Korea. Furthermore, we suggest the Government to establish a regular review cycle for the strategic stockpile, informed by World Health Organisation and Centre for Health Protection surveillance data.

3.5 - Strengthen the Healthcare Architecture through Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme (VHIS)

Reform: VHIS will evolve into a central pillar of Hong Kong's integrated healthcare financing architecture, spanning primary care, diagnostics, treatment, and follow-up. To achieve this, the government should enhance VHIS Standard Plan parameters with higher benefit limits and predictable out-of-pocket structures, while introducing greater product flexibility for younger cohorts, preventive care, and cross-boundary GBA coverage supported by direct billing and efficient data flows. Implementation requires establishing a cross-sectoral coordination mechanism for information sharing and dispute mediation, alongside a centralised data platform for billing and claims to enable AI-driven transparency. By expanding the insured base and fostering medical insurance literacy, these reforms will broaden the risk pool, moderate premium growth, and leverage real-time analytics to improve system efficiency while significantly alleviating fiscal pressure on the HA.

3.6 - Integrate GBA Cross-Boundary Network: As a relief valve for domestic capacity constraints, formalised GBA cross-boundary referrals offer efficiency gains that can partially offset the capital costs of domestic hospital development. To realise this, the Government should develop a policy framework enabling the Hospital Authority to divert appropriate lower-acuity demand to accredited GBA facilities in resource-constrained areas, supported by regulatory measures to facilitate direct billing between Hong Kong insurers and the Mainland providers. Furthermore, commissioning a comprehensive feasibility study on cross-boundary integration will provide the necessary foundation to formalise referral pathways, quality standards, and patient data-sharing protocols.

3.7 - Safeguard Youth Mental Health Support and Literacy: To bolster the resilience of Hong Kong's future workforce, the Government should expand training and capacity-building for teachers and frontline professionals, equipping them with the essential skills to recognise, respond to, and appropriately refer mental health concerns. This should be complemented by embedding age-appropriate mental health literacy into the school curriculum to normalise conversations around wellbeing and equip students with vital coping and resilience skills. We suggest developing a "Youth Wellbeing at Work" pathway, linking schools, tertiary institutions, and employers to support young people's transition into the workforce with appropriate mental health awareness and support mechanisms.

Part 4: Transport & Energy - Low-Carbon, Smart Mobility, and Transition Finance

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should pioneer a framework for **wide-scale transport networks, clean energy integration, and global green capital alignment** by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1** *Transform into a world-class, zero-emission logistics and maritime powerhouse by mandating macro-scale electrification and establishing a high-capacity charging grid; and*
- 2** *Anchor a regional new energy hub for sustainable aviation fuels through circular economy waste-to-fuel frameworks and public procurement mandates; and*
- 3** *Unify the GBA travel route through macro-scale connectivity and lead global transition finance by expanding finance taxonomies to capture emerging low-carbon energy solutions.*

4.1 - Electrify Shipping & Port Operations: To reinforce Hong Kong's role as a low-carbon international shipping hub under the National 15th Five-Year Plan, we suggest the Government to prioritise eMarine initiatives like shore power and harbour craft electrification. While low-carbon fuels remain essential for ocean-going vessels, marine electrification offers a mature, near-term solution to immediately cut emissions at berth, improve local air quality, and shield operations from volatile fuel markets. We are pleased to see initial progress already underway through projects like The Star Ferry's pilot electric ferry tenders in 2024, and we hope to see this positive momentum accelerated across the sector. To achieve this, we propose three recommendations:

- 1) Establish shore power as a priority, phased infrastructure programme at key container and cruise terminals to maintain port competitiveness against regional rivals.
- 2) Accelerate the electrification of local ferries, workboats, and government fleets during natural replacement cycles, utilising public-sector leadership to build industry confidence.
- 3) The Government should integrate electricity system planning with its green maritime fuel strategy, ensuring grid readiness to enable the cumulative demand from shore power and charging infrastructure.

4.2 - Drive Commercial Electric Vehicle (CEVs) Adoption: CEVs are essential for Hong Kong to achieve its 2050 zero-emissions goal, yet their adoption lags behind passenger EVs due to high upfront costs, financing constraints, and buyer risk perception. Although modern electric trucks and goods vehicles now offer competitive total ownership costs, targeted policy interventions are needed to push the market past its tipping point. Hong Kong already possesses a vibrant, well-capitalised private charging market – we suggest the Government should pivot from funding infrastructure to acting as a market enabler.

To drive this transition, we propose the following recommendations. Financially, the Government should enhance public support toward direct purchase incentives for CEV's beyond the existing support measure, such as expanding scrappage schemes, offering zero-interest loans or guarantees

on CEV purchase to ease SME cash flow. This will allow SMEs to overcome the perception barrier of performance and CEV's ownership cost.

Infrastructure-wise, policy should leverage the private charging market which has demonstrated a strong willingness to invest, while mandating ultra-fast charging readiness in new logistics hubs and industrial developments. Finally, the Government needs to provide clear policy signals by establishing an indicative phase-out timeline for internal combustion engines, removing restrictive battery-weight licensing penalties, and planning a medium-term transition toward carbon-based road usage charges.

4.3 - Build a Regional Energy Hub for Sustainable Maritime & Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF):

Biofuels can serve as a vital transitional tool to enable corporate decarbonisation over the coming years. Hong Kong is uniquely positioned to become a regional leader in sustainable fuels, such as biodiesel, hydrotreated vegetable oil, and SAF. We recommend that Hong Kong can achieve immediate, scalable emissions reductions by raising mandatory biodiesel blends for hard-to-abate sectors (e.g. construction) and retaining locally generated used cooking oil for domestic conversion. These approaches create a circular economy while capitalising on cross-border partnerships to build an innovative and resilient regional supply chain. To successfully develop this new energy hub, we outline the following recommendations:

- 1) Hong Kong should mandate a phased increase in biodiesel blending where electrification is not possible, starting with a B10 (10% biodiesel blend) mandate for construction and non-road machinery within 12 months, scaling to B20 (20% biodiesel blend) within 24 months, and expanding to all users within three years.
- 2) The Government can consider anchoring compliance through public procurement, requiring contractors on public works projects to use mandated biofuel blends as a condition of contract awards, where electrification is not possible.
- 3) The city should adopt a "Local used cooking oil First" policy to secure domestic waste feedstocks, while simultaneously building a GBA sustainable fuels industry chain to create a cross-boundary corridor covering upstream certification, midstream conversion, and downstream distribution.

On SAF, we build on our suggestion from last year's submission and suggest the Government should consider providing provisional subsidies for the SAF price differential to lower the green premium until a formal levy is in place. Concurrently, developing local SAF blending capacity is vital. Creating local infrastructure is far more cost-efficient than importing expensive pre-blended SAF, ensuring airlines at Hong Kong International Airport can source fuel competitively under the Open Access System.

4.4 - Unify the "Megalopolis" via the 380km GBA Rail Loop: To fully realise Hong Kong's role as a regional gateway under the National 15th Five-Year Plan, the Government should look beyond localised transit and champion macro-scale connectivity. Moving away from point-to-point "hub-and-spoke" lines, we advocate for a continuous 380km high-frequency transit circuit connecting the GBA's primary urban corridors. This proposal includes prioritising the infrastructure engineering required to close the loop's critical missing link in Hong Kong's northern corridor, unlocking a continuous, high-frequency transit artery that far exceeds any global precedents (such as London's 27km Circle Line or Moscow's 57km line).

4.5 - Set a Global Benchmark for Transition Finance: To support Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050, the Chamber recommends that the HKMA expand its Green Taxonomy in the upcoming Phase 3 update. The taxonomy should include scientifically validated, low-carbon energy solutions such as nuclear energy as well as green fuels like sustainable aviation fuel and advanced biodiesel. Integrating these sectors will provide clear eligibility for critical power and transport decarbonisation projects, aligning Hong Kong with evolving international sustainable finance frameworks.

HONG KONG YOUR WORK HONG NEXT BIG KONG THING HONG

Part 5: International Financial Centre - Global Connectivity

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should build a roadmap for **GoGlobal partnerships, international capital deployment, and next-generation financial market infrastructure** by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1** *Drive the "GoGlobal" initiative as its core growth opportunity, cementing the city's status as the Asia financial hub through collaborative cross border links and high-profile global events; and*
- 2** *Position as the world's premier centre for partnerships, offering a trusted framework for Mainland enterprises to invest and expand with international partners and capturing commercial opportunities across expanding global corridors; and*
- 3** *Establish a next-generation digital settlement network by eliminating friction in cross-border share transfers and synchronising electronic clearing regimes with international markets.*

5.1 - Position Hong Kong as the Global Joint Venture Hub: We highly welcome the Government's recent milestones under the GoGlobal framework, notably the establishment of the GoGlobal Task Force, the launch of HKTDC's "GoGlobal Connect" platform, and the competitive corporate tax incentives introduced in the 2026-27 Budget. Building on this momentum, we reiterate the recommendation from our previous submission for a focused strategy that positions Hong Kong as the world's premier centre for "Reverse Joint Ventures (JVs)". By applying the legacy "China JV model" in reverse, this approach provides a trusted pathway for Mainland enterprises to expand overseas, as it allows partners to share the substantial costs, risks, and rewards of a new business endeavour.

A JV structure directly addresses a common concern in international markets: the fear that incoming Chinese companies might disrupt local industries through price competition. A well-structured JV ensures the local partner is invested in the venture's success, creating alignment and fostering profitability for both sides. This transforms China's expansion from a potential zero-sum scenario into a collaborative, value-creating partnership. Crucially, it aligns with Hong Kong's role in the Belt and Road Initiative, providing a sharp framework to capture commercial opportunities. The GoGlobal Taskforce can establish an official registry of Hong Kong-structured JVs, creating a transparent reputational anchor and a data-driven benchmark that solidifies Hong Kong's long-term leadership in this domain, particularly for infrastructure, green energy transition, and digital economy projects across ASEAN, MENA, and Africa.

5.2 - Enhance Capital Market Connectivity: Global capital markets are rapidly digitising to build more efficient, connected settlement infrastructures. Hong Kong should further develop a blueprint to establish a scalable, fully digital, next-generation infrastructure across all markets and asset classes. A critical priority is eliminating the costly, time-consuming physical "shunting" process currently required for share transfers between Hong Kong and London. By aligning Hong Kong's upcoming Uncertificated Securities Market regime with the UK's scheduled 2027 legislative changes, the two regions can establish an electronic link between Central Clearing and Settlement System (CCASS) and Certificateless Registry for Electronic Share Transfer (CREST) thereby boosting secondary market trading and attracting dual listings.

Simultaneously, Hong Kong should bolster its post-trade capabilities by leveraging Central Moneymarkets Unit (CMU) OmniClear, a joint platform between the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing. The long-term vision positions CMU OmniClear to support cross-asset interoperability, enforce delivery-versus-payment standards, and forge additional linkages with overseas central securities depositories. By complementing the existing CCASS framework, this expansion will integrate diverse asset classes into a unified digital ecosystem, ultimately consolidating Hong Kong's competitive edge as a premier global financial hub.

5.3 - Secure a Summer Davos World Economic Forum: We encourage the Government to treat bringing high-profile multilateral events to Hong Kong as a strategic imperative. While the World Economic Forum's (WEF) flagship winter meeting remains permanently in Davos, the Government can actively target official WEF regional and thematic symposiums, as well as other premier global gatherings like the WEF Annual Meeting of the New Champions ("Summer Davos") or the IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings, leveraging the city's proven infrastructure and experience from hosting the IMF meetings in 1997.

To achieve this, the Government should convene and lead a consortium of key local partners, including HKEX and the HKMA, to co-develop and submit proposals. To differentiate itself from other competing jurisdictions, Hong Kong's core proposition must spotlight its unique role as an indispensable bridge between Western capital markets and China's financial system, offering direct access to Chinese Mainland's senior policymakers and major corporates. The Government should aim to institutionalise these forums into recurring, annual events, solidifying Hong Kong's status as the ultimate global super-connector.

Part 6: AI & Technology - Commercialisation and Workforce Resilience

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should establish a comprehensive blueprint for **AI commercialisation, next-generation talent incubation**, and future-ready workforce transformation by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1** *Leverage the city's trusted professional services, capital liquidity, and legal framework to bridge the gap between research and high-value economic commercialisation; and*
- 2** *Empower the next generation by strengthening graduate programmes and ensure young talents do not get displaced by AI; and*
- 3** *Boost the workforce through targeted upskilling, delivering industry-aligned certifications that merge traditional expertise with modern efficiency.*

6.1 - Position Hong Kong as a Global AI Ecosystem Enabler: We are happy to see that the "AI+" strategy has become the centrepiece of Hong Kong's economic and industrial transformation. To maximise this momentum, we suggest that Hong Kong's unique value proposition for AI leadership is anchored in its strong professional services sector. The city should leverage its liquidity advantage, free capital flows, and trusted legal system to serve as the default gateway for global capital. We advocate for a focus on real-world applications guided by a clear roadmap from research to commercialisation, ensuring that AI adoption aligns with economic priorities to unlock productivity and enhance global competitiveness. Ultimately, to sustain this leadership, the city must cultivate a resilient ecosystem by prioritising targeted talent investment, fostering deeper public-private partnerships, and strengthening cross-border collaboration within the Greater Bay Area and beyond.

6.2 - Empower the Next Generation by Strengthening the Graduate Programmes: The traditional "first job" in Hong Kong is changing because AI can now handle the routine tasks that fresh graduates used to do while learning the ropes. Since AI is faster and cheaper for such work, many companies are hesitant to hire graduates, seeing them as a long-term investment they can no longer afford to train. The Government needs to intervene and partner with businesses to solve this crisis. It is not just about saving jobs; it is about making sure a university degree stays valuable. If our graduates do not get a chance to start their careers, Hong Kong loses its future leaders and its competitive edge. We need to turn this challenge into an opportunity where young talent and AI work side-by-side.

To make this happen, we suggest the Government can offer a stipend for graduates to work on real-world private sector projects to help companies cover the "learning phase" of a new hire. The Government can also offer tax breaks to businesses that commit to hiring a certain number of local graduates, helping to offset the cost of mentorship.

6.3 - Boost the Workforce through AI Integration and Targeted Upskilling: By accelerating upskilling programmes now, we can transition workers into high-value AI-augmented roles and harness AI as a tool for economic resilience rather than job displacement. We suggest training and certification are effective means to such an upskilling process; Research shows that workers in Hong Kong with verified AI skills can command a wage premium over their non-AI counterparts. In our [2025 AI White Paper](#), we suggested establishing deep partnerships with industry leaders to ensure these certifications meet actual market needs and utilising a curated list of accredited programmes that span

both technical upskilling and applied AI for specific sectors. We also recommended periodic reviews to adjust subsidy amounts and approved courses based on workforce needs. These approaches will support by the Government's 2026 agenda for "Upskill Hong Kong."

Building on these proposals, we suggest that these programmes should also be tiered and specialised to address the unique needs of different workforce. For many in specialised fields, the goal is not necessarily a standalone AI certificate, but rather an enhancement of professional credentials that guarantees employment by merging traditional expertise with modern efficiency. The objective of upskilling should retain sustainable employment rather than the mere adoption of AI. By providing tailored pathways, we ensure that upskilling serves as a practical, industry-aligned engine for securing stable employment.

Part 7: Construction - Cost Efficiency and Modern Infrastructure

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should establish a strategic paradigm for **structural procurement reform, strong manufacturing alignment, and carbon standards** by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1 Optimise fiscal efficiency through collaborative procurement models** by implementing open-book schemes and aggregating bulk procurement across public projects; and
- 2 Empower the next generation of modular construction** through early design baselining; and
- 3 Align construction lifecycle processes with international embodied carbon standards** by introducing mandatory disclosures for new developments.

7.1 - Optimise Cost Efficiency Through Procurement Reform: In response to the latest Budget Speech directing the Development Bureau to achieve 10% to 20% cost savings through direct procurement, and in consultation with our members, we suggest that bypassing contractors historically creates monopolies, overestimates savings, and shifts material risks, (e.g. supply chain delays, defects, and material substitution) directly onto the Government. Instead, Development Bureau should achieve cost efficiency by implementing an open-book New Engineering Contract target cost pilot as an interim step to ensure transparency. Furthermore, instead of funding projects in individual silos, the Government should aggregate strategic bulk procurement across upcoming public projects to achieve scale economies on standardised items like doors, sanitary fittings, and copper pipes. Ultimately, the focus should shift toward collaborative delivery models and early contractor involvement because bringing the full project team together during the design phase "moves the needle" on cost far more effectively than attempting to squeeze a minor 2-3% margin from material procurement.

7.2 - Enforce Early Design Baselining for Modular Integrated Construction (MiC): To realise the cost and time-saving benefits of MiC, we suggest the Government should mandate stricter alignment between public bodies, designers, and contractors during the inception phase. Unlike traditional building methods, MiC is a factory-manufacturing process that cannot accommodate late-stage design changes without triggering catastrophic material waste, severe structural modifications, and costly supply chain delays. We propose that project designs must be formally baselined during the early planning stages through collaborative delivery models. Treating MiC as a core manufacturing process rather than an afterthought will prevent the costly site alterations that undermine public works productivity.

7.3 - Align with International Standards on Construction Embodied Carbon: While Hong Kong has progressed in reducing operational building emissions, construction embodied carbon (the emissions from materials and lifecycle processes) presents an important area for policy development to ensure total lifecycle emissions are minimised. We suggest the Government should consider three strategies:

1) Introducing mandatory embodied-carbon disclosure covering both building-level embodied-carbon intensity for new developments and major renovations, and product-level carbon disclosure (such as Environmental Product Declarations) for key construction materials used in public projects.

- 2) Extending existing green building incentive mechanisms, such as gross floor area concessions linked to Building Environmental Assessment Method (BEAM Plus) ratings, to recognise and reward reductions in embodied carbon.
- 3) Expand the taxonomy's real-estate sector criteria to include construction embodied-carbon considerations, with reference to EU and ASEAN taxonomies.

Part 8: SME - Modernised Financing and Agile Procurement

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should establish a dynamic forward-looking ecosystem for SMEs by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1** *Redefine the SME landscape, shifting from the old standard to a multi-factor definition; and*
- 2** *Differentiate funding tracks between short-term agility and long-term expansion, establishing a rapid, streamlined approval window for time-sensitive projects; and*
- 3** *Introduce a pre-approved vendor whitelist to unlock fast-track funding, removing the administrative requirement for multiple quotes to reduce procurement friction.*

8.1 - Redefine the Definition of an SME: The current definition of an SME in Hong Kong – any non-manufacturing enterprise with fewer than 50 employees – applies across key funding schemes including the Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales (BUD Fund) and SME Financial Guarantee Scheme. This definition, unchanged since 1994, can divert limited public resources away from those most in need. The European Union and Chinese Mainland have both adopted a dedicated micro-enterprise tier to better target support – a model from which Hong Kong could refer. The EU defines a micro-enterprise as a business that has fewer than 10 employees and an annual turnover or balance sheet total not exceeding €2 million. China similarly distinguishes micro-enterprises from small ones, using thresholds that vary by industry. In retail, a micro-enterprise has fewer than 10 employees and annual revenue under RMB 1 million; in software, it has fewer than 10 employees and revenue under RMB 500,000.

With approximately 90% of Hong Kong's 360,000 SMEs employing fewer than 10 people, we recommend adopting a multi-factor definition that considers turnover, years of operation, and employee count, aligning Hong Kong with other major financial centres. This reform would ensure that funding schemes target businesses that genuinely lack alternative sources of capital.

8.2 - Differentiate Between Short-Term and Long-Term Financing Needs: The BUD Fund, the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme, and the SME Export Marketing Fund are designed to provide accessible capital to support business growth. Still, these schemes apply a one-size-fits-all approval process regardless of whether an SME requires short-term working capital or long-term financing. In consultation with our members, they shared that lengthy approval processes effectively discourage them from applying for time-sensitive projects: by the time approval arrives, the market opportunity has passed. Many therefore choose to self-fund or abandon the project entirely rather than navigate the red tape. We recommend the Government build on its existing framework by develop distinct funding tracks:

- 1) Short-term track (up to 12 months): For smaller-value projects with rapid execution timelines (e.g., digital transformation, market entry campaigns). Given the lower funding amounts, applications should be streamlined with reduced documentary requirements.
- 2) Long-term track (12–60 months): For capital-intensive projects (e.g., equipment purchase, premises fit-out) with more detailed due diligence.

8.3 - Introduce a Vendor Whitelist for Fast-Track Reimbursement: A significant pain point for SMEs is the requirement to obtain multiple quotes and select the cheapest vendor. For many small businesses, the time and cost of running a full procurement process outweighs the value of the funding itself. As a result, many eligible SMEs simply choose not to apply. We propose that the Government establish a whitelist of pre-approved vendors. SMEs purchasing from whitelisted vendors would be eligible for fast-track reimbursement upon submission of an invoice and proof of delivery, eliminating the need for a full procurement process for each application. For vendors, whitelisting would serve as a market differentiator and incentive to maintain quality standards. The Government could recover the cost of vendor vetting through nominal registration fees or absorb it as an efficiency investment.

HONG KONG ON PLAY HONG ANOTHER KONG LEVEL HONG

Part 9: Tourism & Event Economy - Digital Ecosystems, Vibrancy, and Governance

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should establish a solid framework for **experiential tourism, dynamic city management, and sustainable entertainment governance** by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1** *Deploy an integrated digital event ecosystem by implementing cross-sector platforms that link global ticketing sales with local transit and hospitality networks; and*
- 2** *Form specialised leadership for the night economy by appointing an independent Night Mayor role to bridge regulators and businesses; and*
- 3** *Mandate environmental accountability for large-scale public attractions.*

9.1 - Deploy "HK Play Pass" to Connect the Event Economy: While Hong Kong's current mega-events strategy successfully attracts high-spending visitors for standalone events like Art Basel and the Rugby Sevens, these travelers often remain isolated within their venues. We propose a "HK Play Pass" – a unified digital ecosystem that embeds city-wide perks directly into an event ticket at the exact point of sale. When a consumer purchases an event ticket through global platforms like Klook or Ticketmaster, the ticketing API instantly generates a QR code pre-loaded with benefits. This pass automatically unlocks transit via a complimentary MTR pass, alongside F&B discounts spendable at places like Lan Kwai Fong through existing local payment networks (e.g. Octopus or AlipayHK). To bring this experience to life, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau should take the lead in uniting global ticketing giants with local transport and hospitality networks, ensuring a seamless transition from passive event hosting to proactive, city-wide economic synergy.

9.2 - Appoint a Night Mayor to Champion the Night Economy: To revitalise Hong Kong's legendary after-dark culture, the Government should consider appointing a Night Mayor. Pioneered by Amsterdam and now successfully operating in over 60 cities worldwide (including London and New York) this role creates an independent advocate whose sole focus is helping the city thrive between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. A Night Mayor would serve as a bridge connecting nightlife business owners, creative artists, residents, and government regulators. By tackling complex late-night challenges, such as expanding public transit options, mediating noise concerns between venues and residents, and designing safe, inclusive public spaces, a Night Mayor will help Hong Kong safely unlock its full economic potential and solidify its status as a world-class 24-hour city.

9.3 - Create Sustainability Standards for Mega Events: While we are thrilled to see so many world-class artists and international performers choosing Hong Kong, hosting these massive events also means we need clear sustainability standards in place. Large concerts and festivals act like “mini cities,” generating huge amounts of waste, energy use, and transport demand in just a few days. We should ensure our mega-events are as sustainable as they are entertaining by requiring all Government-funded events and major public venues to follow basic green guidelines, such as the global ISO 20121 standard. Additionally, relaunching the Government's Green Event Guidebook as a mandatory rulebook for funding will encourage organisers to openly track and report their carbon footprints.

9.4 - Secure and Expand the World Youth 10s (WY10s): WY10s represents a flagship rugby initiative that aligns directly with the Government's Major Events Strategy. Building on its successful debut in April 2026 - which brought together 235 teams and 5,000 participants - the planned 2027 expansion will host over 50 international and 200 local/GBA teams at the Hong Kong Football Club and Happy Valley pitches, positioning the tournament as the definitive launch of Hong Kong's iconic “Rugby Week” ahead of the Sevens. Beyond providing local youth athletes with elite international competition pathways, the event drives significant economic impact by collaborating with travel and hospitality sectors to deliver curated cultural, and educational itineraries across Hong Kong and the wider GBA. To realise this vision, we recommend that the Government convene a cross-bureau coordination discussion to support two priorities: 1) Support from the Leisure and Cultural Services Department to secure all pitch space at Happy Valley for 2–4 April 2027 (plus any essential set-up/pack-down time) to provide the venue certainty required for contracting teams, officials and partners; 2) Funding to support marketing and recruitment of international schools and clubs to maximise international participation in the initial years.

Part 10: City Branding - Strategic Communication and Global Storytelling

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should deploy a global positioning to **build the city's international identity and elevate reputation management** by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1 **Implement a facts-driven, proactive communication blueprint** backed by international public relations expertise to shape a strategic narrative; and
- 2 **Transform destination marketing around unique lifestyle synergies**, showcasing Hong Kong's competitive work-life balance; and
- 3 **Amplify a cross-sectoral global advocacy network**, platforming a diverse coalition of authentic local voices to share genuine experiences on global stages.

10.1 - Establish a Proactive Strategy for Hong Kong's Brand: In our past submissions, we have called on the Government to invest in professional PR and advertising expertise to rebuild Hong Kong's image in a communication environment that is challenging for many global cities today. Now in its second year, our Asia's World City x BritCham Campaign continues to champion the business community, driving positive impact in Hong Kong and abroad. This year, we are taking an even bolder approach, amplifying our message and taking it to a more international stage. We've found that the best way to connect with people is by showcasing aspects of Hong Kong that resonate with their everyday experiences. To showcase its unique work-life balance, marketing can emphasise how a bustling business hub sits just 30 minutes away from world-class hiking trails and serene natural escapes. Importantly, to protect this image, the city must implement a transparent, strategic communication plan that counters negative narratives swiftly – by leading with facts, highlighting concrete progress, and consistently steering the conversation toward Hong Kong's future vision and achievements.

10.2 - Transforming Stories into a Global Advocacy Campaign: We commend Hong Kong Talent Engage (HKTE) for their efforts in sharing the stories of individuals moving to Hong Kong through short-form videos, and we look forward to seeing more of these inspiring features in the future. To amplify this impact, we suggest transforming these features into a high-profile series backed by cross-bureau and cross-sectoral support and distributing them to a wider international audience across diverse channels. Specifically, the Government should actively identify, empower, and platform a diverse coalition of authentic storytellers, including artists, chefs, scientists, entrepreneurs, influencers, and athletes, to share positive and genuine Hong Kong stories on global stages such as TED, YouTube, and Instagram Reels.

HONG KONG LEARN HONG YOUR KONG WAY UP HONG

Part 11: Talent - Retention, Newcomer Readiness, and Housing Support

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should emphasise a **talent retention** and **upward-mobility strategy** by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1** *Shift focus from talent acquisition to long-term talent retention by optimising school placements for dependents and removing non-essential language barriers; and*
- 2** *Attract global talent by creating a playbook for immediate arrivals, deploying serviced apartment partnerships, and establishing peer-driven networks; and*
- 3** *Help young people buy their first home by complementing existing debt-access guarantees with structural financial incentives.*

11.1 - Retain Global Talent to Drive Business Growth: We commend Hong Kong Talent Engage (HKTE) for its efforts in providing job-matching services, showcasing success stories at the Global Talent Summit, and subsidising Cantonese upskilling to bridge language gaps. The business community views the influx and retention of high-quality talent as a critical pillar for Hong Kong's long-term economic competitiveness. While the Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS) has successfully attracted skilled individuals, we propose the focus must now shift toward sustainable retention and integration into the local workforce. We suggest the government further enhance support through the following measures:

To alleviate operational costs for businesses, the Government should streamline the recognition of overseas qualifications and professional licensing. This must involve working closely with professional associations and institutes to modernise their frameworks. For highly experienced global professionals, the current system frequently mandates redundant, entry-level local examinations - a significant barrier to talent retention. The Government and professional bodies should establish fast-track exemptions that prioritise verified global experience over basic testing. To maximise hiring efficiency, the Government should also encourage employers to drop non-essential language requirements for roles where they are not critical to job performance.

To encourage long-term settlement, the Government should implement a dedicated school placement system for TTPS dependent children to efficiently match students with available school places across districts. This should be complemented by enhanced relocation services, including housing advice, community onboarding, and the development of robust multicultural networks to help talent and their families integrate smoothly into society.

11.2 - Support New Graduates to Settle Smoothly: From our observations, Hong Kong has become a top choice for many young graduates moving from the UK - a testament to the Government's work in promoting and branding the city. When speaking with these young professionals, we found that their first two weeks after arrival are often the most difficult. Many stay in temporary accommodation while trying to find a long-term home, all while trying to adapt to an unfamiliar city. To address this, we suggest Hong Kong Talent Engage can create a step-by-step digital guide for new visa holders. This guide would include a checklist of what to prepare before leaving, alongside a practical timeline for their first 14 days, covering essential steps like getting an Octopus card, setting up a local SIM card, and applying for an Identity Card. Crucially, the Government should collaborate with the private sector to co-create and distribute a universal playbook, ensuring this information achieves wide adoption and reaches incoming graduates and professionals.

To further ease this transition, HKTE could partner with local serviced apartments to offer discounted short-term housing for these newcomers. These partnering accommodation providers could be authorised to issue a temporary proof of address, solving the common problem where newcomers cannot open a local bank account right away. HKTE can establish an "HK Buddy" programme that pairs newly arrived individuals with others who share a similar background - come from the same country and speak the same language - giving them a familiar and relatable support network during their first few weeks.

11.3 - Help Young People Buy Their First Home: Hong Kong's housing policies have done a great job making mortgage loans much more accessible, with credit to the Housing Authority for removing stress tests and guaranteeing loans of up to 95%. However, mortgage accessibility alone is not effective if home purchases remain unaffordable. To address this, we suggest the Government provide more financial support and draw on international models. The UK's Lifetime Individual Savings Account, for example, adds a 25% cash bonus to first-home savings, while Australia's First Homeowner Grant offers direct cash assistance and stamp duty exemptions.

Part 12: Equity & Inclusion - Living Wages, Family Support, and Diversity

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should deploy a socio-economic framework to **foster workplace equity** and solidify its standing as **an inclusive global talent magnet** by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1 **Safeguard purchasing power** by transitioning to a statutory minimum wage; and
- 2 **Modernise family support** through a shared parental leave model; and
- 3 **Embed structured diversity, equity, and inclusion principles** into statutory and administrative frameworks to mitigate talent-drain capital losses.

12.1 - Review Current Minimum Wage to Ensure Alignment with Cost of Living: To enhance social equity and shield low-income workers from inflationary pressures, the Government should amend the Minimum Wage Ordinance to link future statutory minimum wage adjustments directly to a localised cost-of-living index, such as the Consumer Price Index, the The Chinese University of Hong Kong Quality of Life Index, or the The University of Hong Kong Expense-Frequency Price Index. Transitioning from the current formulaic review to an automatic, index-linked mechanism would safeguard the purchasing power of the city's low-income employees. Furthermore, this policy would eliminate lag in wage adjustments, provide corporations with predictable annual updates to reduce compliance uncertainty, and lower public expenditure on low-income financial supplements.

12.2 - Implement Shared Parental Leave: We commend the Government's recent steps to strengthen local family support, particularly the decision to remove the cap on school-based after-school care places and expand the network of aided childcare centres. Having long advocated for these measures, we are pleased to see these positive policy moves officially adopted. However, more progress is needed on parental leave reform. We propose extending parental leave to align with international standards by introducing a shared parental leave entitlement of 20 weeks that parents can divide flexibly - following the models in Singapore and the UK. Recognising the potential burden on employers, especially SMEs, the Government could extend its current subsidy (which covers weeks 11 to 14 of maternity leave, capped at HK\$80,000) to include the additional 6-week period, with a cap of HK\$100,000 for this duration. To ensure fiscal sustainability, the Government could consider limiting access to this expanded subsidy to employers with low revenues or profits, creating a targeted, means-tested mechanism that protects businesses while successfully improving job retention and boosting household disposable income.

12.3 - Enhance Competitive Edge through Structured DEIB Frameworks: To sustain Hong Kong's status as Asia's premier hub, we continue to encourage the Government to make steady, structured progress toward establishing a statutory framework for same-sex partnerships. Rigorous macroeconomic data from [Open for Business](#) highlights that a modern, inclusive legal landscape is a direct driver of fiscal resilience and talent retention. Currently, the absence of protection of LGBTQ rights and those in same-sex partnerships creates an unnecessary barrier to attracting top-tier global professionals, costing Hong Kong an estimated HKD 22.6 billion annually in lost economic value, diminished innovation, and forfeited fiscal contributions.

To bridge this regulatory gap, we suggest a cross-bureau working group should be convened to systematically audit exclusionary legislation and amend Hong Kong's anti-discrimination ordinances to outlaw sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace. To reinforce this in the private sector, the Labour Department should amend section 5 of its Code of Practice against Discrimination in Employment on the Ground of Sexual Orientation by recommending that employers extend all standard spousal employment benefits (where provided), including medical insurance, dependent coverage, relocation allowances, and bereavement leave, to be inclusive of those in same-sex marriages/civil partnerships. The Inland Revenue Department should also undertake a formal review of tax and financial provisions where couples in same-sex civil partnerships recognised overseas are currently treated less favourably than heterosexual married couples.

12.4 - Foster Diversity in Public Administration: For Hong Kong to solidify its reputation as an international city, its government workforce, senior officials, and advisory boards should mirror that global identity. We suggest that the Government should actively recruit from a more diverse permanent resident population. This can be achieved by shifting from strict language requirements to role-specific standards, recruiting potential candidates into departments where English is already the primary global medium. By building a workforce that reflects its multicultural demographic, the Government can boldly signal to the international business world that Hong Kong remains an open, progressive, and globally minded city.

Part 13: Education - Next-Generation Proficiency

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should create a **visionary educational strategy to establish a multi-cultural academic environment** by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1 Reinforce English as the cornerstone of the GoGlobal initiative**, championing it as the designated language of business and multilingualism to protect the city's competitive edge; and
- 2 Reform language education around real-world application**, shifting from passive, exam-oriented drilling toward immersive, interactive models; and
- 3 Build systemic local-international academic partnerships**, facilitating peer-to-peer exchange, joint projects, and cross-cultural fluency.

13.1 - Align English with Global Gateway Ambitions: To reinforce Hong Kong's pivotal role in the "GoGlobal" initiative, we propose the recognition of English as the designated language of business and multilingualism in Hong Kong. The business community views widespread English proficiency as a critical advantage for maintaining multinational corporate headquarters, securing investor confidence, and preserving the city's competitive edge on the world stage. This alignment will solidify the city's status as a premier global hub and a gateway for international exchange.

13.2 - Shift English Teaching Toward Real-World Application: We praise the Government's commitment to ensuring all new English teachers meet the Language Proficiency Requirement, which actively maintains Hong Kong's high standard of English as a critical strategic asset. Building on this foundation, our recommendation is to move away from paper-based exam drilling and toward creative, interactive teaching methods that emphasise practical utility. Classroom time should focus on collaborative group projects, public speaking, and presentations that build student confidence for real-world communication.

13.3 - Bridge Local and International Schools: Building on the success of the Education Bureau's Sister School Scheme with Chinese Mainland institutions, the Government can consider launching a Local-International Sister School Programme to incentivise year-long partnerships between local publicly funded schools and international or private schools in Hong Kong. This initiative will pair local and international campuses to co-design structured programming, such as joint English language workshops, cross-school debates, and collaborative science, technology, engineering, and mathematics or arts projects, where international students serve as English conversation partners to enrich local language proficiency.

Part 14: Schools - Ecosystem Development, Education Flexibility and Capacity

The Hong Kong Five-Year Plan should establish a spatial strategy for **educational infrastructure development, resource allocation, and international community** by 2030. To achieve this:

- 1** *Transform Northern Metropolis education sites into a commercially driven community ecosystem, building roadmap that unlocks institutional investment and confidence; and*
- 2** *Maximise public asset efficiency through the adaptive re-use of underutilised infrastructure; and*
- 3** *Pioneer regulatory flexibility for international education providers to capture domestic demand, sustain school viability, and retain local families within the city's talent pool.*

14.1 - Accelerate Land Allocation for International Schools in the Northern Metropolis: Realising the full potential of school development in Northern Metropolis requires shifting from simple land sales toward fostering a comprehensive, commercially driven ecosystem. Much like the infrastructure needed for data centres, motivating private investment and operator participation depends on the Government providing greater clarity and tangible incentives. The goal is to build a connected community rather than just isolated schools. To that end, we suggest the Government should release a detailed demographic modelling, provide clear, forward-looking data on projected population composition and talent influx to help operators accurately assess market demand. We also suggest establishing a predictable roadmap for dedicated school sites to build market confidence and motivate long-term institutional investment.

14.2 - Repurpose Decommissioned Schools & Optimise the Re-use of Vacant School Sites: We suggest the Government should consider repurposing decommissioned school facilities through a competitive bidding process. To ensure viability, the Government should offer initial capital subsidies and operational support until these projects are stabilised. Preferred use is for educational purposes, with adaptive re-use as community, youth, or senior centres encouraged where schools are not feasible. Alongside these revitalisation efforts, it is equally important to establish a bidding process for vacant school sites that explicitly prioritise educational expansion or broader community needs (such as student accommodation) over competing housing developments.

14.3 - Structure Balance for International Student Ratio: We call for a review of the 70:30 international student ratio to balance local school enrolment needs with the necessity of maintaining international school viability. Many international schools struggle to meet the 70% non-local student quota while public schools simultaneously face under-enrolment. To address this, we suggest allowing international schools to take in a slightly higher percentage of local students. This would prevent local families from leaving Hong Kong to seek overseas education, thereby keeping talent in the city. Specifically, we propose that older, established schools in shrinking districts, or newly built schools in the Northern Metropolis, receive a temporary allowance, such as a sliding scale of 60:40, that can be re-evaluated every three years.

